

On first opening Dr. Balyeat's book on *Hay-Fever and Asthma*⁹ the reader cannot fail to be struck by a series of illustrations, designed to impress upon his memory certain common causes of these complaints. Thus there is a family of cats sunning themselves on the steps just prior to entering the house, whose inhabitants may suffer in consequence. Then there is a boy playing with a dog, a frequent cause of his asthma. Next comes a horse, Kentucky bred, to show that horses may cause asthma, and so on. The last of the series depicts a lady seated before a mirror. Her right hand is stretched out to pick up the powder-puff from the dressing-table, for she is about to powder her nose, and the orris-root in the powder may give her asthma. These and other illustrations equally ridiculous and conspicuous give an altogether false impression of the book, for the text is excellent. Dr. Balyeat practises in Oklahoma, and gives a thorough account of the local flora in relation to asthma and hay-fever, laying stress on the fact that the important plants are inconspicuous with air-borne pollen, whilst plants with brilliant flowers, such as roses, pollinated by insects, are often unjustly blamed. It is clearly important that those who make a study of these diseases should be acquainted with the botany of the locality. The book is intended to give an account of the nature and treatment of asthma and hay-fever in simple language mainly for the benefit of patients, and the author has accomplished this very well.

Drs. ROBERT DUPONT, ROGER LEROUX, and JEAN DALSACE have provided¹⁰ in a succinct and convenient form a guide to the clinical methods of obtaining material for examination in the laboratory, as, for instance, by the performance of lumbar and pericardial puncture, both of which are illustrated by diagrams. Pathologists and bacteriologists, but the latter perhaps in particular, often suffer from the manner in which specimens are collected and transmitted to them, and they will no doubt desire that this handbook should have a wide circulation. The first part deals with haematological, bacteriological, and other examinations, and the remaining portions with biopsies. Professor G. ROUSSY, in his preface, says that this is the first time that a book of the kind has described the technique of biopsies with the immediate microscopical examination during the course of an operation of tissues, so as to inform the surgeon, for example, whether he is dealing with an innocent or malignant growth. This may be true of France, but the latter method has often been advocated and described in this country, especially by Dr. E. H. Shaw, and in America. The risks that have been attributed to the method are discussed, and in connexion with the belief that generalization of a malignant growth may be thus started the authors state that they have done thousands of biopsies without observing this accident. It is perhaps a natural sign of the times that the price is stated, not in francs, but as two shillings.

Mr. GEORGE MULLINS, in his book *Unemployment*,¹¹ advances the view that unemployment has resulted from failure to co-ordinate agricultural with industrial production. If the agricultural labourer produces food, not only for himself, but also abundantly for the industrial dweller in towns, and so sets a high standard of living, he utilizes the services of many craftsmen, with the betterment of efficiency and enrichment of the lives of the members of the community. For a long time past agriculture has been depressed, wages are low, and labourers flock to towns; with the result that there is really a world shortage of food, and the advance guard of civilization starves. And the form of its starvation is unemployment. The remedy Mr. Mullins proposes is that the industrial worker shall be made to resume a proportion of his original work of food production. New factories should be built on large areas of land, and the workers housed in cottages with a half to one acre of ground to each house. The workman would be employed for a seven-hour shift in the factory for five days a week. A certain number of hours each week would be devoted to the cultivation of his land for the production of vegetables, fruit, honey, pigs, rabbits, and goats. The labourer would be required to acquire the freehold of his cottage, and would only be allowed to dispose of it to another labourer working on similar terms to himself. He would also be given a share in the profits of the company, not in cash, but in shares, which he would not be able to sell while he retained his

work, though they would become equal to ordinary shares if he left his job. It will be seen that Mr. Mullins combines in his remedy several modern efforts for improving the lot of the worker; and that his views on food shortage are borne out by Sir Daniel Hall's remarks at the meeting of the British Association last summer.

Dr. KURT SCHNEIDER's studies of registered prostitutes¹² consist of two parts. The first contains details of seventy women arranged in twelve psychiatric groups according to their degree of impulsiveness, restlessness, and mental defect. The second presents a composite picture of the life-history of these women considered under the three periods of childhood, the stage between leaving school and registration, and their life under the control of the police. An appendix by Dr. LUISE VON DER HEYDEN gives detailed information of the subsequent history of 62 of the 70 women; 19 were still under police control eleven years after completion of Dr. Schneider's inquiry, while 43 had been taken off the books in consequence of marriage or the assumption of a respectable occupation. The work is a valuable contribution to the psychological study of the prostitute, and as such will appeal alike to the psychiatrist, the criminologist, and the sociologist.

¹² *Studien über Persönlichkeit und Schicksal eingeschriebener Prostituerter*. Von Dr. med. et phil. Kurt Schneider. Zweite durchgesehene Auflage vermehrt um einen Anhang. Die Späteren Schicksale. Katamnestische Untersuchungen von Dr. rer. Pol. Luise von der Heyden. Berlin: J. Springer. 1926. (Sup. roy. 8vo, pp. ix + 281. R.M. 18.)

PREPARATIONS AND APPLIANCES.

A Safeguard for the Water-cooled Mercury Vapour Lamp.

DR. M. WEINBRENN, medical officer in charge of the ultra-violet department, Queen's Hospital, Sidcup, suggests an arrangement for protecting the water-cooled mercury vapour lamp (Kromayer type) from the destruction which would result if the lamp was allowed to burn without there being circulation of water. To prevent this accident he inserts a red lamp in parallel with the Kromayer lamp, and controlled by the same switch. This red lamp is suspended from the water-tap, and lights up when the Kromayer lamp is switched on. If, through carelessness or accident, the water has not been turned on, the lighting-up of the red lamp immediately draws attention to the tap. Dr. Weinbren adds that, while an apparatus could be designed which would automatically switch on the water as well as the current, this apparatus would be rather complicated and expensive. The red pilot lamp serves the same purpose equally well, and only costs a shilling or two.

ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND.

At the last meeting of the committee forty-four cases were considered and £769 13s. 6d. voted to forty applicants. The following is a summary of some of the cases relieved.

Widow, aged 36, of M.B. who died suddenly in November last. Left with one child, aged 2, entirely unprovided for. Has recently had a major operation herself, and will not be fit for work for six months. Late husband had to help to support his mother and sister, which debarred him leaving adequate provision for his wife and child. Emergency grant of £10 sent, and a further sum of £25 in four instalments was voted.

L.R.F.P. and S., aged 84, with wife, aged 80, who is paralysed and helpless. Only income £12 from investments; old age pension 55s. Allowance of £90 per annum from younger son, who also pays for the maintenance of elder son in a mental hospital. Elder daughter, aged 51, is at home and looks after her parents, while the younger earns 25s. a week in a warehouse. Rent and rates amount to £36 per annum. Emergency grant of £10 made, and a further sum of £40 in twelve instalments voted.

Daughter, aged 52, of M.D. who died in 1874. She lost money on a boarding house which had to be given up at the end of nine months. Teaches music, but from lack of pupils asks the Fund for assistance. She is lame. Voted £18 in twelve instalments.

Widow, aged 65, of L.R.C.P.Ed. who died in 1919. Applicant has worked as a deaconess for years until August last, when she had to give up on account of leg trouble. Total income £90 per annum. Rent 11s. a week. Voted £26 in twelve monthly instalments.

Widow, aged 45, of M.R.C.S. who died last November. Left with girl of 14 and boy of 12. No private income, and only £100 from insurance. Has had £150 from mother-in-law, but it is uncertain whether this will be continued. Now lives in three rooms at a rental of 12s. a week. Voted £20.

Widow, aged 53, of M.D. who died in December last. Left with six children aged 11 to 21. Only the eldest one earning. One son studying the law, others at school. Voted £30.

M.R.C.S., aged 73, has had to give up work on account of old age and deafness, and has just lost an allowance of 10s. a week through the death of a sister. Has the old age pension. Wife has a post in a school. Children unable to help in any way. Voted £40 in twelve monthly instalments.

Subscriptions may be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Sir Charters Symonds, at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W.1.

The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund Guild still receives many applications for clothing, especially for coats and skirts for ladies and girls holding secretarial posts, and suits for working boys. The Guild appeals for second-hand clothes and household articles. The gifts should be sent to the Secretary of the Guild, 58, Great Marlborough Street, W.1.

⁹ *Hay-Fever and Asthma: A Practical Handbook for Hay-Fever and Asthma Patients*. By Ray M. Balyeat, A.M., M.D. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company. 1926. (Post 8vo, pp. 198; 27 illustrations. 2 dollars.)

¹⁰ *Technique des prélèvements et des biopsies dans la pratique clinique*. Par Robert Dupont, Roger Leroux, et Jean Dalsace. Préface du Professeur G. Roussy. Médecine et chirurgie pratiques. Paris: Masson et Cie. 1926. (54 × 73, pp. viii + 142; 50 figures. 2s.)

¹¹ *Unemployment*. By George W. Mullins, M.B.E. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd. 1926. (Demy 8vo, pp. xiii + 140. 6s. 6d. net.)