

Reviews

TOXAEMIAS OF PREGNANCY

The Pregnancy Toxaemias, or the Encymonic Atelositeses. By G. W. Theobald, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S.Ed., F.I.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., M.R.C.P. With a chapter on the Adrenal Cortex by John Dawson, M.B., Ch.B., M.Sc. (Pp. 488 + xiv; illustrated. 63s.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1955.

The author, at one time Professor of Obstetrics in Bangkok University, has for more than a quarter of a century interested himself in the problem of pregnancy toxæmia. Others who have worked in the East have been aware of the heavy toll this disease takes of maternal and foetal lives. In the United Kingdom it now ranks as the highest single cause of maternal mortality. The title to Dr. G. W. Theobald's book is a little mystifying. A search through the dictionaries in a large medical library has failed to trace the etymology of "encymonic atelositeses." The author in his preface states that "eclampsia represents a failure of adequate adaptation to the pregnancy-lactation syndrome for which there are three main causes, (1) inherent defects in the expectant mother, (2) mechanical, and (3) nutritional factors: . . . the nutritional factor alone can be controlled adequately, hence the term pregnancy atelositeses or, more correctly, encymonic atelositeses." This explanation still leaves one mystified as to the meaning and origin of these words.

The book is divided into four parts. The first and most comprehensive describes the pregnancy-lactation syndrome, and includes modern views (as well as the author's original work) on water metabolism, oedema, oliguria, proteinuria, and hypertension. In this section is a lucid and informative chapter on the adrenal cortex by Dr. John Dawson, Lecturer in Biochemistry in the University of Leeds. The second part reports clinical facts; the third enumerates the hypotheses about eclampsia; and the last advises on prevention and treatment of pre-eclampsia and eclampsia. At the end of each chapter is an extensive bibliography.

In view of the recent emphasis on the importance of electrolyte balance in relation to the maintenance of normal cellular function, Claude Bernard's century-old aphorism—"La fixité du milieu intérieur est la condition de la vie libre"—has at last become accepted as a fundamental clinical tenet. The author, a clinician with a training as a physiologist, stresses those physiological changes in normal pregnancy which when deranged are responsible for the condition known as "toxæmia." The chapters relating to prevention and treatment of toxæmia are those that will appeal most to practising obstetricians. Many will agree that "the present trend of the Ministry to cut down the number of hospital maternity beds will indubitably militate against the possible development of the ideal standard of antenatal care. Normal cases can be safely confined in their own homes, in the ambulance, or under bridges, but nobody can tell, until the event is over, which cases will be normal." There has been a tendency to concentrate antenatal care during the last few weeks of pregnancy; mortality and morbidity from toxæmia will be reduced only by vigilance during the middle months. With earlier detection of the disease more antenatal beds will be needed. The author goes so far as to propose that the expectant mother should be seen weekly from the twenty-fourth week until term. His outline of a scheme for the organization of such a procedure is one which merits study by all who are responsible for the care of pregnant women.

Theobald has always been a proponent of the scientific method. The results of his original research and ideas are now available, and obstetricians should be grateful to him for this book, which will long remain indispensable to those who are in practice and to those who are seeking to elucidate one of the most baffling of the diseases that afflict the human species.

W. C. W. NIXON.

TISSUE TRANSPLANTS

Transplantation of Tissues: Cartilage, Bone, Fascia, Tendon, and Muscle. By Lyndon A. Peer, M.D. Volume I. (Pp. 421 + xii; illustrated. £5 2s. 6d.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1955.

It is beyond question that the surgeon's activities are both rendered necessary and made possible by individual cellular reaction. The neoplasm, the inflammatory reaction, and the ulcer are all expressions of variations from the cellular normal. The process of healing after an incision is an expression of cellular activity. The restorative process of grafting of tissue succeeds or fails as the individual cells in the transplant survive the phase of deprivation of their normal metabolic supplies, and recover to continue their specific activities. That we know nothing of the mechanism which controls the cells poses a question for the future. The immediate concern of the author, and indeed of all surgeons, is an analysis of our present knowledge of the behaviour of the cytological elements of the tissues commonly used as transplants. About many of them little is known; about others much is clear; but much still remains to be intelligently interpreted.

The author has in this first volume dealt with the problems presented by cartilage, bone, fascia, tendon, and muscle. He has prefaced his study of the individual tissues by a section on general histology. In each of the main sections of the book transplantation in animals and in man is dealt with and the literature is excellently reviewed. Indeed, this is perhaps the greatest of the many merits of the book. None the less the subject is far from being dryas dust, and is relieved by succinct summaries after each chapter, and by an appropriate section of purely clinical material. If there can be criticism, it is that the word "graft" is used to describe both heterogenous and homogenous tissues. As the author shows that the majority of such "grafts" do not survive transplantation, it would seem that the use of the word applied to these tissues is somewhat misleading. One prefers to regard a graft as something which survives and reproduces itself, retaining its own characteristics and relying on the host area only for its metabolic needs. Would it not be preferable in talking of heterogenous tissues to use the word "transplant"? This is perhaps an academic point and detracts not at all from the excellence of the book.

Dr. Peer deserves the thanks of every clinician for bringing order out of the chaos of the somewhat emotional thinking that surrounds bone banks, corneal banks, and skin banks—some, at least, of which have been, and still are, used without due regard for the probabilities of success in the essential process of producing a living graft.

R. MOWLEM.

SMOKING AND HEALTH

The Biologic Effects of Tobacco: With Emphasis on the Clinical and Experimental Aspects. Edited by Ernest L. Wynder, M.D. Foreword by Joseph Garland, M.D. (Pp. 215 + xiii; illustrated. 32s.) London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1955.

The purpose of Dr. Wynder's book is to review the evidence about the effect on health of smoking tobacco and to distinguish fact from fancy. The eight authors are all experts on the subject with which they deal, and six of the seven chapters are concise summaries of the present-day knowledge, fully documented with references. The first two chapters, by Dr. Alison I. Kosak and Dr. Charles J. Kensler, provide background data on the chemistry and pharmacology of tobacco smoke. The four succeeding chapters review the physiological and pathological effects attributed to smoking in relation to the cardiovascular system, the induction of cancer, the gastro-intestinal tract, and allergic phenomena. They are contributed respectively by Drs. Ellen McDevitt and Irving Wright, by Dr. Wynder himself, by Dr. Robert C. Batterman, and by Dr. Francis C. Lowell. The last chapter (which should be read first) breaks new ground, or rather