

increasing belief that the "bistouri diathermique," or other suitable electrode, will revolutionize surgery, particularly in its relation to the cure of cancer. The treatment of accessible cancers and tumours by diathermy coagulation has yielded results beyond all hopes, and in certain cases quoted has proved superior to  $x$  rays and radium. The chapter on cancer of radiologists shows that diathermy coagulation has brought fresh hope to the treatment of radium dermatitis. This treatment has also been successful in cases of lupus where actinotherapy was not suitable—that is, where the lesion was extensive and deep, and the patient anxious for a quick cure and less concerned with the good cosmetic result achieved by light. The author supports his observations with convincing notes and photographs of the patients he has treated.

As long ago as 1919 Dr. Bordier was using diathermy coagulation in treating tonsillar hypertrophy and infection, and continues to find the results all that he wishes for. There is never any haemorrhage, the bactericidal effect is enormous, and the scar non-adherent and supple. He has treated children with success, but does not advocate this method for those under 10 years. His original treatment of anterior poliomyelitis, combining radiotherapy and galvanization with diathermy, is now being practised by many electrotherapeutists.

To the casual observer, this book may seem to be advocating diathermy as a universal remedy, but on closer study it is obvious that the author speaks from a thorough experience, and has a sound basis for his statements.

#### CUTANEOUS RAY THERAPY

During the last twenty years actinotherapy in one form or another has become increasingly important in the treatment of skin diseases, and in particular the debt owed by dermatologists and their patients to the healing powers of  $x$  rays and radium has become incalculable. Nevertheless, there have not been many practical handbooks written on the subject, and consequently we welcome Dr. H. H. HAZEN's volume on *Cutaneous X-ray and Radium Therapy*.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Hazen is a dermatologist of very great experience in this subject, and the methods and technique which he describes can be safely followed. There is, however, one great difference between American and European practice in the measurement of  $x$ -ray dosage. On this side of the Atlantic we are still accustomed to rely on the Sabouraud pastille, while in America (owing apparently to the dryness of the atmosphere) it has proved unsatisfactory, and hence Americans for the most part use an arithmetical formula, which has to be worked out separately for every  $x$ -ray tube. In consequence of this, gas tubes, the output of which varies considerably, are almost extinct in America, and their place is taken by the Coolidge tube, which lends itself to comparatively easy standardization.

Dr. Hazen's remarks on the action of radiation upon pathological tissues are very interesting. He does not believe that the cure of cancer depends upon the direct destruction of cancer cells, and thinks that the work done by those who have spent their energies in searching for the lethal dose necessary in dealing with various forms of cancer has been largely wasted. He believes that the tissue reaction is the central factor in the cure. His discussion of this very important and interesting subject is well worth reading. The importance of radiation as a therapeutic agent is brought home by his classification of skin diseases amenable to its effects. These are classified

into thirteen groups, ranging from those in which radiation gives good results with or without the aid of other therapeutic agencies, down to a group of rare diseases in which radiation has occasionally been successful. Perusal of this list shows quite clearly how wide is the scope for actinotherapy in dermatology. In some conditions the  $x$  ray, and in others radium, is the agent of choice. In the treatment of plantar warts much better results are claimed for radium than for  $x$  rays, but the difficulty which these troublesome lesions give to the dermatologist is proved by the very odd confession that very old warts are so difficult to handle that they are best left untreated. In our opinion, even the most stubborn will yield to a suitable combined therapy. We have but little else to cavil at in an excellent and practical book, which should be read alike by dermatologists and by those radiologists who interest themselves in the problems of superficial therapy.

#### NOTES ON BOOKS

The fifth edition has now appeared of Professor HERRICK's textbook, *An Introduction to Neurology*.<sup>6</sup> With the increase of knowledge now available the subject-matter has been thoroughly revised and the details brought up to date. The main part of the book consists of a detailed account of the anatomy and physiology of the brain and nervous system; the illustrations are clear and the index is good. Controversial difficulties, such as the functions of the cerebral cortex, are dealt with thoughtfully, and the book will be welcomed by those who wish to place their neurological knowledge on a sound basis.

The seventh edition of *Bainbridge and Menzies' Essentials of Physiology*<sup>7</sup> has been again revised by Professor H. HARTRIDGE, who contributes new chapters on the basic principles of the blood, the heart, the circulation, respiration, the autonomic nervous system, the digestion, the metabolism, the kidneys, ductless glands, and sex organs. The account of the central nervous system has been rearranged with a view to clarifying the information. In the previous issue—which appeared in 1929—the chapters dealing with the sensory nervous and muscular aspects of physiology were rewritten by him. The whole volume is now up to date; it can be warmly commended to medical students and others interested in elementary physiology.

The appearance of a fourth edition of the well-known book *Tropical Hygiene*,<sup>8</sup> by the late Sir PARDEY LUKIS and Colonel BLACKHAM, is in itself the best testimony to the useful purpose which it serves. The present edition has been revised by Lieut.-Colonel A. D. STEWART, and chapters on sprue, filariasis, relapsing fever, leprosy and typhus, maternity and child welfare, etc., have been added. The aim is to provide a book on elementary hygiene which will appeal to the ordinary resident in the Tropics, and peculiarly in India. This aim has been well fulfilled. The book is admirably conceived, its scope has been carefully chosen, and the subject-matter, though intended for the non-medical reader, is treated in a properly scientific manner, and opinion when expressed is well balanced. Communicable diseases in the Tropics, and the part played by insects, climatic conditions, water, food, nutrition, clothing, housing, and sanitation, are dealt with in turn as in a large textbook. Its chief use will be,

<sup>5</sup> *An Introduction to Neurology*. By C. Judson Herrick. Fifth edition, thoroughly revised. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1931. (Pp. 417; 138 figures. 12s. 6d. net.)

<sup>7</sup> *Bainbridge and Menzies' Essentials of Physiology*. Seventh edition. Edited and revised by H. Hartridge, M.D., Sc.D., M.R.C.P., F.R.S. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1931. (Pp. x + 583; 166 figures. 14s. net.)

<sup>8</sup> *Tropical Hygiene*. By the late Surgeon-General Sir Pardey Lukis, K.C.S.I., and Colonel R. J. Blackham, C.B., C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.D., D.P.H. Fourth edition, revised and enlarged by Lieut.-Colonel A. D. Stewart, M.B., F.R.C.S.E., D.P.H., D.T.M. and H., I.M.S. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co. 1931. (Pp. xi + 441; 79 figures. Rs.5.)

<sup>5</sup> *Cutaneous X-ray and Radium Therapy*. By Henry H. Hazen, M.D. London: H. Kimpton. 1931. (Pp. 166; 28 figures. 12s. 6d. net.)

as it is intended to be, for those resident in India and the East; for this reason plague in South Africa, trypanosomiasis, and American leishmaniasis find no place; also it may be mentioned that venereal diseases, yaws, and schistosomiasis are not dealt with, and helminth injections outside ankylostomiasis receive but scanty notice.

*Minor Surgery*,<sup>9</sup> by the late Mr. L. R. FIFIELD, has now been revised by his colleague Mr. R. J. MCNEILL LOVE, who has preserved in the second edition the general style and arrangement which proved so acceptable to many readers. Certain additions have, however, been made in regard to the examination of the patient, and a short section on the ear has been included, dealing with the presence of foreign bodies, rupture of the drum, acute otitis media, and furunculosis of the external ear. The new edition will be welcomed by students and practitioners who desire a short practical summary of minor surgery clearly expressed and well indexed.

The formation of the National Government and the subsequent general election have brought about many changes in the sixty-fourth annual issue of *Whitaker's Almanack*,<sup>10</sup> published early in December in order that it may be available for transmission over-seas before the end of the year. The Cabinet as reconstructed and the New House of Commons are included, together with articles on the financial crisis and government by party. Statistical tables are also provided to show the source of the world's food and other products, and the quantities and places of origin of Great Britain's food imports. The preliminary results of the Census are recorded. The index has again been enlarged, and now consists of 140 columns, containing upwards of 20,000 references.

The recent financial and social conditions in Germany probably account for the fact that since the commencement of this year there has been a marked slowing-down in the appearance of the various volumes of the third edition of Kolle and v. Wassermann's *Handbuch der pathogenen Mikroorganismen*,<sup>11</sup> which is being published serialim. We have now received three further Parts—48, 49, and 50. The last of these is indicated as the conclusion of the whole series, and contains a general detailed index, a list of authors, and an analysis of the contents of each of the preceding volumes. Part 48, which is concerned entirely with dysentery, has been prepared by the capable hands of Professors O. Lentz of Berlin and R. Prigge of Frankfurt. As in the case of the rest of this series, a great amount of minute detail is compressed into the volume, which will thus be of more particular interest to research workers. Part 49 contains an account of paratyphoid infections, prepared by Dr. G. Elkeles of Berlin and Dr. R. Standfuss of Potsdam. Each volume includes a comprehensive bibliography, and these three final Parts form a fitting conclusion to a work of high merit.

The series of French books entitled *Précis de Pathologie Médicale*<sup>12</sup> is being issued in eight or nine volumes, of which some have already appeared and others are in course of preparation. The third volume, on respiratory diseases, by F. BEZANÇON and S. I. DE JONG, has reached a second edition, and the fourth volume, on diseases of the heart and vessels, by M. A. CLERC and N. DESCHAMPS, has recently been issued. These well-illustrated books aim at giving to medical students and practising physicians a general review of the pathological aspects of disease, the subject being approached from the clinical rather than from the purely pathological point of view. The complete series is a valuable addition to a medical library, and the two volumes which have just appeared maintain the high standard previously reached.

<sup>9</sup> *Minor Surgery*. By Lionel R. Fifield, F.R.C.S. Second edition, revised by R. J. McNeill Love, M.S., F.R.C.S. London: H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd. 1931. (Pp. viii + 440; 281 figures. 12s. 6d. net.)

<sup>10</sup> Paper cover, 3s. net; cloth, 6s. net.

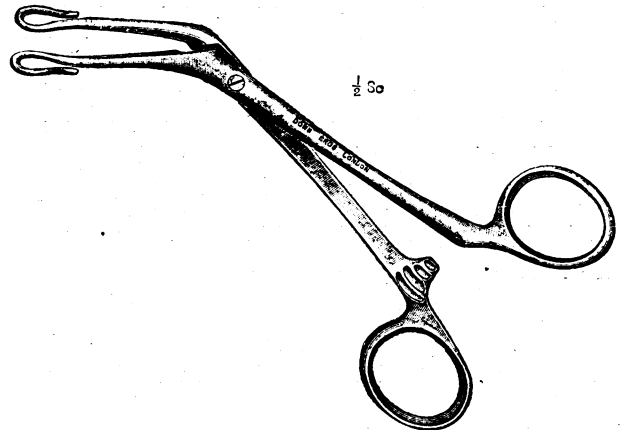
<sup>11</sup> *Handbuch der pathogenen Mikroorganismen*. Begründet von W. Kolle und A. v. Wassermann. Lieferung 48, 49, 50. Dritte, erweiterte Auflage. Jena: G. Fischer; Berlin und Wien: Urban und Schwarzenberg. 1931.

<sup>12</sup> *Précis de Pathologie Médicale*. Tome III, *Maladies de l'Appareil Respiratoire*; Tome IV, *Cœur; Vaisseaux*. Paris: Masson et Cie. 1931. (70 fr. and 100 fr.)

## PREPARATIONS AND APPLIANCES

### A NEW SUTURE-HOLDING FORCEPS

Mr. W. H. OGILVIE, F.R.C.S., writes: The continuous suture, rare on the Continent but almost universal in Britain, requires that the material shall be held taut after each stitch, to prevent slack developing in the suture line. In most surgical operations this is best done by the hands of the assistant. In bone and joint surgery, where "no touch" methods are an essential part of good technique, this is not permissible, and the surgeon must either use interrupted stitches or employ some form of suture-holding forceps. The usual patterns have metal jaws which, though smooth, weaken the suture material considerably where they grip it, so that it may break at the time or afterwards, allowing the whole length of the suture line to gape. This accident is very liable to happen with the fine 00 catgut usually employed for tendon suture, for approximating the synovial membrane and capsule of a joint, or for closing the soft tissues over a bone. Down Brothers have made for me a pair of suture-holding forceps, whose general design is that of the familiar



Guy's pattern, but whose blades end in a rounded loop open at one end, over which is slipped a length of fine rubber tubing. The rubber gives a secure grip, but cannot injure the finest gut; it can, of course, be renewed when worn.

### OUABAIN

Ouabain (Burroughs Wellcome and Co.) is a crystalline glucoside extracted from the seeds of *Strophanthus gratus*. In virtue of the fact that it can be obtained in a chemically pure form this substance has been adopted in certain countries as the standard of reference for the bio-assay of cardiotonic drugs. For clinical use it has the advantage of being a pure crystalline substance readily soluble in water.

### BIOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF ORAL DISEASE

Spirogyt ointment for massage of the gums is stated to contain 35 per cent. of fuso-spirochaetic antiviral. Besredka showed that heated filtrates of microbic cultures could produce local immunity, and Séguin investigated the action upon lesions of the gums of filtrates of this kind prepared from the flora of the mouth. He concluded that they produced a beneficial action, and the preparation under consideration is based on this work. The makers claim that it has given satisfactory clinical results. It is marketed by Sealand Trading Co., Ltd.

### COLLOIDAL MERCURY SULPHIDE

Mercolloid (Bio-Chemical Laboratories, Ltd., Locarno) is a preparation of mercury sulphide in colloidal form. It is supplied in ampoules for intramuscular injection. The makers claim that the injections are painless, that the drug is well tolerated, and that it has a powerful treponemocidal action. It is recommended for the treatment of syphilitic and parasyphilitic conditions, and also for the treatment of psoriasis. Chemical analysis of a sample supplied to us showed that about four-fifths of the mercury sulphide was suspended in colloidal form, whilst the remainder had formed a precipitate.

### BRITISH HYPODERMIC NEEDLES

British Surgical Industries, Ltd. (14, Regent Street, S.W.1), have placed on the market their new all-British stainless steel hypodermic needles. It is claimed that the quality is superior to that of needles of Continental manufacture, which have for so long been in general use; the prices at which they are retailed compare favourably with those of the foreign articles.