

## Reviews

### BRITISH SURGERY

*Textbook of British Surgery.* Edited by Sir Henry Souttar, C.B.E., D.M., F.R.C.S., and J. C. Goligher, Ch.M., F.R.C.S. Volume 2: The Central Nervous System—the Eye—Ear, Nose and Throat—Mouth, Salivary Glands, and Jaws—Neck—The Breast—The Oesophagus—The Heart and Lungs. (Pp. 694+viii; illustrated. £5 5s.) London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1957.

In their preface to the *Textbook of British Surgery* the general editors, Sir Henry Souttar and Professor J. C. Goligher, write: "The advances of surgery in the past twenty years have been so great that no one individual can master all the fields which they have opened. On the other hand it is important that candidates for the higher examinations should be familiar with the whole subject, for only thus will they be able to select for their future career the branch for which they are best adapted." This is of course profoundly true, although familiarity with the whole subject might be regarded as an axiom of proper surgical education rather than a means of selecting a future specialty. There can be no doubt, however, that the day of the truly general surgeon is rapidly passing, and in consequence it becomes increasingly important that in a book which ranges over the whole subject the coverage in each branch should be most carefully scrutinized. It must be sufficiently informative and detailed to meet the intelligent interest of those working in other branches, and yet not overloaded with specialist knowledge; in particular it must cater for the needs of those entering for the higher examinations, never overlooking the fact that for the most part the examiners for these distinctions are themselves general surgeons with perhaps a special interest.

The second of the four volumes of this work has now been issued, and we believe that it answers these requirements most admirably. It includes such important sections as those on the central nervous system; heart and lungs; oesophagus; eye; ear, nose, and throat; breast; mouth; and neck, all written by acknowledged experts. From the viewpoint of the general surgeon it is to be noted that too much preliminary knowledge and information is not assumed, as it is in many special books written to-day, yet, on the other hand, the text is not cluttered with elementary details. In other words, a creditable *via media* has been followed, as would be expected from the known versatility of the senior editor. The illustrations—there are some 350 in this volume—are excellently chosen and reproduced; in particular the line drawings representing individuals suffering from various cardiac lesions deserve attention as a succinct method of visualizing a case. The general production of the book too is of a high standard. On the whole the text is well written, although in a few places the composition could be improved, and there are very few printer's errors: Figs. 266 and 267 are printed sideways for no obvious reason; caption numbers in Fig. 268 are wrong; "patient" for "patent" appears on page 520. We noted two unusual spellings which, as they are repeated, must be deliberate; thus "sella tursica" in place of "turcica," and "membraneous," which the *O.E.D.* allows as a possible variant of the common "membranous." "Tetralogy" also is retained despite Ffrangcon Roberts's criticism that the "correct expression is 'Fallot's tetrad.'" But these are carping criticisms of an outstanding publication, deserving of the highest praise, which will be of great value to surgical examination candidates and to surgeons in general.

NORMAN C. LAKE.

### EPIDEMIOLOGY FOR THE CLINICIAN

*Uses of Epidemiology.* By J. N. Morris, M.A., F.R.C.P., D.P.H. (Pp. 135+viii; illustrated. 17s. 6d.) Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1957.

If, as the author states, epidemiology is the Cinderella of medical sciences, this book shows how wrong is that

opinion, for this is a vivid, exciting book. It may sound dull to be told that it explains how epidemiology can be used along with clinical and laboratory methods to increase our knowledge of disease; how it reveals the incidence of a disease in a community and tries to disentangle the various "causes"; how it may help to establish the full picture of a clinical syndrome, pick out odd geographical variations of disease incidence, or calculate the chances of any one person in any given circumstances suffering from any particular disease. But it is not. The author shows how epidemiology is concerned with life and death, discusses whether how we live affects how we die: it may try to find "what precedes the bronchitis, emphysema and cor pulmonale seen in hospital," or it may be concerned with the effects of married women going out to work, the mass use of antibiotics, the building of new power stations, or the eleven-plus examination. The effects of smoking on lung cancer and the relation between atheroma and ischaemic heart disease are problems which demand the epidemiological approach.

The book shows how these epidemiological methods can be applied to widely differing problems. It is written for the clinician rather than the epidemiologist, and its purpose is to stress the relationship between epidemiological and clinical medicine. There are many figures and tables and even a few graphs, but this need not deter the least statistically minded reader: the author's style makes everything clear. The book can be read in a few hours and can be recommended as light medical reading for jaded clinicians, whether in hospital or general practice. The more intelligent of them, along with their public-health colleagues, will read it more than once; they will acquire thereby a new and fresh outlook on their clinical problems.

A. B. CHRISTIE.

### BLOOD TRANSFUSION

*A Guide to Blood Transfusion.* By R. J. Walsh and H. K. Ward (Pp. 164; illustrated. £A.1.) Sydney: Australian Red Cross Society (N.S.W. Division) Blood Transfusion Service. 1957.

This short book will surely prove extremely useful. It covers quite a wide field and deals with the blood donor, the preparation of blood products and their uses, transfusion apparatus and the technique of transfusion, blood-grouping and compatibility tests, the complications of transfusion, and the use of transfusion in treating haemolytic disease of the newborn; and it includes some advice on the setting up of a transfusion service in a hospital—and all this within a compass which can easily be spanned in an evening's reading.

As in many first editions of textbooks, some things have been included which seem a little out of place. For example, there are tables giving the amount of blood which may be removed from donors according to their sex, weight, and haemoglobin value. Surely it is a little fanciful to suggest that if a woman has a haemoglobin concentration of 11.7 g. per 100 ml. and weighs 6 stones (38.1 kg.), she can safely give 200 ml. (but not 250 ml.). There is certainly no harm in reminding everyone that very small people contain less blood than large ones, but since most transfusion services take a fixed amount (about 420 ml.), provided the donor's haemoglobin value is above a certain agreed level, the most practicable way of protecting the small donor is to set a lower limit of size (weight). Though very few matters of importance in transfusion have been omitted, it would have been well to mention, in discussing the complications of transfusion, that the duration of the infusion has a considerable influence on the incidence of thrombophlebitis.

Perhaps the part of the book which is most controversial is that dealing with cross-matching. Here there is a tendency to overpraise simple tests, and the Coombs test receives rather rough handling: it is described, for example, as "tedious but accurate if controls are included." By contrast, the use of 10% polyvinylpyrrolidone as a suspending medium, which the authors favour, is described as "simple, rapid, and