

BLINDNESS IN WEST AFRICA

Blindness in West Africa. By F. C. Rodger, M.D., Ch.M., D.O.M.S. Pp. xiv, 262. 1 colour plate. 6 maps. 96 text figures. 70s. net. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1959.

This monograph reports the work of a team charged with the task of assessing the nature and incidence of blindness and its causes among the 12 million inhabitants of a vast track of West Africa. An important part of the task was a detailed investigation of the common but less well-known disease of onchocerciasis.

A description is given of the area and its people and previous surveys are discussed. Briefly the findings of the team are as follows: The number of cases of blindness is estimated to be about 200,000. In the area as a whole, the main causes are trachoma, senile cataract, and specific exanthemata. Where onchocerciasis is hyperendemic this disease becomes the main cause. It was also thought that malnutrition plays an important role.

The statistical treatment of the data is sophisticated. The assessments are based on 'random' samples but the author does not elaborate on how the samples were obtained. The question of reliability of diagnosis is not discussed.

This is an outstanding book, beautifully produced and illustrated. It is confidently recommended to specialists, general readers, and anyone interested in epidemiology in Africa.

A.M.A.

PSYCHIATRY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Psychiatry and the Public Health. University of London Heath Clark Lectures 1957 delivered at The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. By G. R. Hargreaves. Pp. 118. 18s. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1958.

The author is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Leeds. That a psychiatrist is called upon to contribute to a lecture series on the history and progress of preventive medicine indicates the growing realization by those responsible for maintaining public health how great is the significance of psychiatric disorder. This is accepted by the author, who believes that if schizophrenia is to be brought under control, as cholera was in the last century, it will be by the type of social action known as public-health practice.

With the gradual evolution of the medical discipline of psychiatry, true hospitals for the mentally ill developed during the 19th century. But by the early 20th century the 'mental hospitals' were housing thousands of chronic irrecoverable patients (who had previously been housed in workhouses), and the care of the mentally ill remained apart from the general body of medicine.

As in some countries in recent years a closer relationship has developed between psychiatric and general hospitals, and between psychiatrists and physicians, great community advances have been

made in the treatment of mental illness. Moreover, psychoneurotic patients, who in former centuries had to seek treatment from a physician or a paramedical 'healer', became recognized as requiring psychiatric care. The province of psychiatry was swollen still further with educational advance and the clearer recognition of varying grades of mental defectiveness. Finally, the child-guidance movement, concerned originally with delinquency, altered the practice of psychiatry so that now treatment can only be provided adequately by a therapeutic team of psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker in active and continuing contact with the resources of the community in which they work. With the concept of psychosomatic medicine the gap which used to exist between psychiatry and general medicine has been filled.

Tracing this development with clarity and erudition, Hargreaves concludes that it is the local health authority who must accept the new frontier in public-health practice—the restoration to social effectiveness of the mentally ill and the promotion of mental health in the community.

H.W.

SURGERY OF BONE AND JOINT TUBERCULOSIS

Surgical Treatment of Bone and Joint Tuberculosis. By R. Roaf, M.A., M.Ch.Orth., F.R.C.S.Ed., F.R.C.S.Eng., W. H. Kirkaldy-Willis, M.A., M.D., B.Chir., F.R.C.S.Ed. and A. J. M. Cathro, M.B., Ch.B. Pp. viii + 137. 90 figures. 30s. net. + 1s. 7d. postage abroad. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1959.

This slim volume is packed full of valuable information written in concise, excellent English. The experience of the authors, who have seen and managed a vast amount of bone and joint tuberculosis, is of particular interest to South African orthopaedic surgeons because most of their clinical material has been African. In South Africa one is aware that the type and course of bone and joint tuberculosis are different from what is encountered in Great Britain.

The use of streptomycin and other ancillary drugs has made direct operative opening of a tuberculous focus a safe procedure. Consequently, today, treatment is measured in terms of months and not years, and we aim primarily at mobility of a joint, and not 'rigidity', wherever possible. These principles are well supported by the authors' analysis of the Kenya patients.

Throughout the book there is a balanced judicious approach to the question of operative interference. It is stressed in several places that in synovial tuberculosis conservative treatment yields better results. This has been the experience of the reviewer in South Africa.

The operative procedures are clearly described and well illus-

trated and most of the radiographs have reproduced remarkably well.

The foreword aptly states that the book will serve as a needed guide for surgeons who frequently treat bone and joint tuberculosis, and as an excellent reference for those who treat the condition occasionally. M.S.

PHYSIOPATHOLOGY OF THE LEUCOCYTES

Physiologie und Physiopathologie der weissen Blutzellen. Von H. Braunsteiner, G. Brecher, H. Brücher, E. P. Cronkite, H. Dittrich, F. Fey, H. v. Foerster, G. Grabner, A. Graffi, R. Gross, R. Höfer, W. Kosenow, P. Miescher, F. Seelich und W. W. Smith. Herausgegeben von Univ.-Doz. Dr. H. Braunsteiner. Pp. viii + 346. 30 Abbildungen. Ganzleinen DM 59.00. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1959.

The editor remarks in the preface that haematology mainly deals with the morphology of white blood cells, but that their physiology and pathological physiology are seldom mentioned in haematological text-books. It is to fill this gap that he has compiled this book in collaboration with 15 other authors.

There are chapters on eosinophils, basophils, mast cells, lymphocytes, neutrophils and plasma cells. Amongst the matters dealt with are the regulation of the number of white blood cells, and also antibodies, sex chromatin, congenital malformations of leucocytes, etc. As a whole the book furnishes an excellent review of the physiology of leucocytes; and in general the authors adopt the review approach and do not confine themselves to their own personal opinions. Every chapter is provided with an extensive bibliography; for example, there are 442 references on the subject of eosinophils.

While most of the contributions are excellent, variations in quality are apparent. This is inevitable, but the editor should try to reach some uniformity among his authors about basic questions such as whether in acute inflammation polymorphs or monocytes are the first cells to appear on the stage. This, however, is perhaps the reviewer's only criticism of this useful book. H.W.W.

THE FOUNDER OF THE BMA

The Life and Times of Sir Charles Hastings Founder of the British Medical Association. By William H. McMenemey, M.S., D.M., F.R.C.P., D.P.M. Pp. xii + 516. 32 illustrations. 50s. net + 2s. 7d. postage abroad. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1959.

The year 1958 marked the centenary of the passing of the Medical Act in England, and this book honours the man who probably had most to do with the placing of this Act on the Statute Book. In 1832 Dr. Charles Hastings, practising in Worcester, had founded an association of doctors which became the forerunner of the great British Medical Association. Known throughout the world, it became the 'parent body' of other medical associations, including our own.

This book tells the story of the life of a man who was devoted to the ideal of building up a strong professional body to be the guardian of the honour and interests of the profession and to bring about such reforms in both professional and public social life as were possible at the time. Amid much detail it gives an account of the life and personality of a great man and glimpses of the characters of some of his associates; in many ways it is a record of contemporary England.

Those who enjoy and appreciate medical history will not wish to miss this excellent account of the early beginnings of a great medical association and the life of its founder. A.H.T.

THE HAEMOGLOBINS

Abnormal Haemoglobins. A symposium organized by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, established under the joint auspices of UNESCO and WHO. Edited by J. H. P. Jonxis and J. F. Delafresnaye. CIOMS. Pp. ix + 427. Illustrations. 45s. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1959.

Although the behaviour differences of haemoglobin to denaturation by alkali have been known for almost a century, the demonstration by Pauling, Itano, Singer and Wells in 1949 that the haemoglobin in sickle-cell anaemia is electrophoretically abnormal,

sparked off activity that was almost explosive. Haematologists, clinicians, geneticists, anthropologists, and chemists, applied themselves to the problems involved and within a mere decade no less than 12 different haemoglobins have been described and studied and, more recently, the heterogeneity of haemoglobin-A (Hb-A) has been established. A vast and somewhat scattered literature has accumulated as a consequence. The appearance of this volume is not only timely, but extremely welcome.

The first half of the volume concerns itself with a historical review, technical methods employed in identification, and criteria for interpretation and broadly with the individual haemoglobin syndromes. A chapter is included on different haemoglobin types in animals. The chapters are in the form of reviews by recognized authorities, with brief general discussions appended to some reviews. Bibliography is comprehensive up to 1957, with some references to work published during 1958.

The second half is broadly headed as the geography of haemoglobins, and is a portrayal of haemoglobin syndromes in various countries. The volume is concluded by a statement on the nomenclature of the more recently described haemoglobins.

Even though Hb-S and thalassaemia appear to be the only haemoglobin syndromes which are encountered in this country, this volume is invaluable as a source of reference and interest to pathologists, haematologists, physicians and biochemists, for the subject is in the stage of rapid development and the heterogeneity of Hb-A may have far-reaching consequences in clinical medicine. S.M.J.

SURGERY OF STOMACH AND DUODENUM

Surgery of the Stomach and Duodenum. A handbook of operative surgery. 3rd revised edition. By Claude E. Welch, M.D., D.Sc. (Hon.). Pp. 405. 83 plates. \$9.75. Chicago: Year Book Publishers, Inc. 1959.

The 3rd edition of this illustrated handbook of surgery is proof of its popularity in the USA. It is meant primarily for surgical trainees as a ready reference to well established standard procedures of the stomach and duodenum. There is a description of each procedure opposite a series of line drawings. The illustrations are simple and easy to understand; most of them are self-explanatory. All the standard varieties of gastric and duodenal procedures are illustrated and described and the text, although brief, is clearly written and carries the stamp of authority and the experience of one of America's most eminent surgeons. The operations are those that have proved most satisfactory and are performed at Massachusetts General Hospital. There is a useful list of normal laboratory values and an extensive bibliography.

The book can be recommended as a useful reference for surgeons in training and as a guide for practising surgeons to operations of proven value. While not comparing with the larger illustrated volumes that have in recent years become available, it will nevertheless find a useful place in the surgeon's library. A.E.K.

INTERNATIONAL PHARMACOPOEIA : SUPPLEMENT

International Pharmacopoeia. 1st edition. Supplement. Pp. xx + 224. 25s. Published also in French. Spanish edition in preparation. Geneva: World Health Organization. 1959.

The Third World Health Assembly, in May 1950, approved the publication of the *International Pharmacopoeia*. Any member state of the WHO may include all or part of the work in its national requirements. The Pharmacopoeia has been of direct assistance to manufacturing laboratories and national administrations dealing with pharmaceutical preparations, and facilitates international commerce and therapeutics.

Vol. 1 contains 218 monographs and 43 appendices, vol. 2 217 monographs and 26 appendices, and this supplement under review 94 monographs and 17 appendices. The contents of these 3 volumes are now being examined for possible introduction into the second edition of the *International Pharmacopoeia*, which is now in preparation.

The supplement contains monographs on hormone preparations, antimalarials, contrast media, antibiotics, and many other drugs. A revised appendix deals with international biological standards. There are tables of usual doses for children and adults, and appendices on the preparation of isotonic solutions and buffer solutions and the determination of pH. Much useful and valuable information is to be found in the volume. N.S.