

## BOEKBESPREKINGS : BOOK REVIEWS

## CLINICAL DERMATOLOGY

*Clinical Dermatology for Students and Practitioners.* By Harry M. Robinson, Jr., B.S., M.D. and Raymond C. V. Robinson, B.S., M.D., M.Sc. (Med.). Pp. xi + 242. 117 figures. \$8.50 and 68s. Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox Ltd. 1959.

The morphological approach to dermatology is not often encountered in text-books in English, although it is common in other languages. After an introduction on basic considerations the common, and some of the uncommon, dermatoses are listed according to the nature of their lesions, with short notes on diagnosis, histopathology, relationship to systemic disease, and treatment. The manner of presentation is attractive, the illustrations are clear and the methods of treatment suggested are completely up to date, but the initial good impression is damped by errors in spelling (not attributable to the proof-reader because some are repeated) and of fact too numerous to be ignored.

Pustular syphilis is not limited to negroes; parapsoriasis *en plaque* should read *parapsoriasis en plaques*; tar melanosis is not a synonym for melanosis of Riehl and poikiloderma of Civatte; milker's nodes heal long before 6-10 months; epidermolysis bullosa may have no relationship to any systemic disease in Maryland, but it often has elsewhere; kerion is no longer thought to be due to pyogenic infection complicating ringworm. A low point is reached with adenoma sebaceum, where Koenen is spelt Koenon and his periungual tumours are described as subungual; Balzer fares no better as Balzar and his tumours are said, incorrectly, to be unrelated to systemic disease; Hallopeau and Leredde escape mutilation by omission. Many dermatologists would check on their technique if they saw necrotic reactions to patch tests.

This well-planned little book cannot be recommended until these and other mistakes have been corrected. J.M.

## ECOLOGY OF DISEASE

*The Ecology of Human Disease.* By Jacques M. May, M.D. Pp. xxiv + 327. \$7.50. New York: MD Publications, Inc. 1959.

In this book, the first of 3 volumes, Dr. May, Medical Director of the American Geographical Society, attempts to bridge an important gap in our knowledge and understanding; for disease is almost invariably the result of a cumulative process with many aetiological factors, and efficient treatment and prophylaxis are dependent on a knowledge of these factors.

In 34 pages May discusses the principles of human ecology, which is also dealt with by Martí-Ibañez in a 13-page foreword. The remaining 260 pages are devoted to discussions of the aetiology, and differences in various countries, of 10 specific transmissible (bacterial and viral) diseases. Amoebiasis, yaws and certain nematode infections are likewise discussed, and geographical features are described for each. Effects of disease on man and his environment are hardly considered and the ecological picture is in this respect incomplete. Scarlet fever, for instance, is discussed without any reference to the incidence of rheumatic fever or nephritis.

The use of a line of different thickness, or a dotted line, would have improved the maps of routes of the pandemics of cholera, and shading or stippling would have made the map on page 50 more readily intelligible. Some chapters have a summary, some have conclusions, but several do not give these features.

The book is well written. The South African reader will find references to Cluver, Gear, Elsdon-Dew and others. There is much that is new and fascinating in the holistic explanations of aetiology, and those with an interest in history will derive considerable satisfaction. B.J.K.

## MATERIA MEDICA, PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS

*Hale-White's Materia Medica Pharmacology and Therapeutics.* 31st edition. By A. H. Douthwaite, M.D., F.R.C.P. (London). Pp. viii + 525. 25s. net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1959.

This text-book was edited by the original author in its first 19

editions from 1892 to 1927. The subsequent editions, from the 20th in 1931 to the new volume under review, have been revised and kept up to date by the present editor, who is a well-known senior physician at Guy's Hospital, London. The original style has been maintained. Small and large type, special emphasis by heavy type, and much subdivision of sections, have been used to make for easy reading, reference, and study. Drugs are considered in groups, but the arrangement would be more helpful if it conformed as far as possible with the practical needs of the physician, i.e. according to the main systems of the body affected by therapeutic agents. The unsatisfactory classification is shown for example in the following sequence: group 19 (acids) is followed by suramin and pentamidine isethionate (group 20), carbon dioxide, oxygen, and helium (group 21), iodides and other iodine compounds (group 22).

This edition has been completely revised. Much that is of importance to practitioner and student in the B.P. 1958 has been included. Many new synthetic drugs and antibiotics, newer pharmacological knowledge in general, and advances in rational therapeutics have been considered. This book will continue as one of the popular texts on drugs. N.S.

## MEDICAL SERVICES OF THE RAF IN WORLD WAR II

*Medical History of the Second World War. The Royal Air Force Medical Services. Volume III. Campaigns.* Edited by S. C. Rexford-Welch, M.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., R.A.F. Pp. xxv + 730. 67 plates. 57 maps. 37 figures. 105s. net. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 1958.

This volume deals with the medical services of the Royal Air Force in the Second World War.

Eleven campaigns are described fully, and since these took place in geographical areas varying from arctic snow to tropical heat, very different medical problems presented themselves, and solutions had to be found for them. The narrative takes the reader from the utter inadequacy in equipment and trained personnel that existed in 1939, to the highest standards of preventive and therapeutic medicine that prevailed at the end of the war. How this was achieved makes interesting and stimulating reading.

The problems specific to air warfare are discussed, e.g. flying stress and the psychological reactions of population, both civilian and servicemen, to sustained attack; so too are the methods used to combat these states. Throughout it is evident that the medical officer can be of great help only if he remembers to be a man first, an officer second and a doctor third.

Those interested in the science of public health and hygiene, particularly in tropical areas, will have nothing but admiration for those who were not overwhelmed by the difficulties which had to be faced and overcome.

Since this is a historical account, its style is factual, as one would expect, for therein lies its permanent value. Nevertheless, it gives me pleasure to record that it is very readable throughout, and in parts quite gripping and even exciting. R.L.F.

## WORK AND THE HEART

*Work and the Heart.* Transactions of the First Conference on Work and the Heart. Edited by F. F. Rosenbaum, M.D. and E. L. Belknap, M.D. Pp. xxii + 537. Illustrations. \$12.00. New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc. 1959.

This work consists of the transactions of the first Wisconsin Conference on 'Work and the heart'.

An evaluation of the present status in this field is made and it has brought out the many studies and observations that are already available, and also those that are still needed to solve problems in the field of work and the heart.

The various panels cover basic physiology, clinical physiology, pathology, work classification, workmen's compensation, and the outcome and prospects in relation to heart conditions. We thus find reports concerning the influence of environment upon the work load of the circulation, the effects of very strenuous athletic competition upon the heart, and the demands of ordinary factory employment. There is a discussion on the mechanisms causing coronary thrombosis. The results of careful evaluation of cardiac patients before their return to work are reported, and the fact

that patients with heart disease can work with safety is demonstrated.

A broad analysis is made of the current status of laws and procedures in this field.

The volume therefore makes a contribution in a wide field for laboratories, clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation units, industries, and courts of law.

A.J.B.

#### WRITINGS OF SIR WILLIAM OSLER

*A Way of Life and Selected Writings of Sir William Osler, 12 July 1849 to 29 December 1919.* (Formerly titled *Selected Writings of Sir William Osler.*) Edited by a Committee of the Osler Club of London with the help of W. W. Francis, *et al.* Pp. xx + 278 + 16. 5 illustrations. \$1.50. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1959.

The name of Sir William Osler is one of the great in medicine. His researches and position as an educator would alone have given him a place out of the ordinary, but in addition he was a renowned historian and essayist.

This book brings to the reader selections of his writings which show Osler as a humanist and man of letters. The choice covers many of his better-known studies and includes his 'Letters to my House Physicians' and 6 of his sketches of great physicians. Many will have read these essays and appreciated them when they appeared in 1951 as 'Selected Writings of Sir William Osler', published by the Oxford University Press. The present edition, produced by Dover Publications, is designed to bring the pleasure they give to a wider circle and at a price within the reach of a student.

A.H.T.