MEDICAL NEWS

A meeting of the Medical Society of the L.C.C. Service was held at the County Hall, S.E.1, on Wednesday, May 8th. Papers were read by Mr. R. V. Lewys-Lloyd on "Fractures of the Hand," Mr. J. C. Gillies on "Infections of the Hand," and Mr. J. Gabe on "Injuries to Tendons, etc."

The three speakers stressed the dangers of paying too little attention to the treatment of minor injuries, and gave their views of the ideals to be aimed at to achieve successful treatment.

BOOK REVIEWS

A SYNOPSIS OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY


The ninth edition of A Synopsis of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, by Aleck Bourne, has recently appeared.

The book pretends to be nothing more than its name implies—a synopsis—and those of us who are familiar with the author’s abilities as a teacher know that he would make no other claims for it.

As Mr. Bourne points out, “there is a basal core of fact that must be learnt by the undergraduate,” yet in some instances the core may be so thin as to become of doubtful value. I refer particularly to the section dealing with sex hormones which I consider too sketchy even for a book of this sort. So very much of modern Gynaecology, especially treatment, is based on a thorough knowledge of the action and inter-relation of the sex hormones that I feel the subject should have been dealt with more fully.

In contrast to this the section on Sterility is delightfully adequate. I have not often, even in much fuller works, found the investigation of a case of sterility so well presented.

The treatment of cancer of the cervix is clearly dealt with. It is a subject which lends itself well to synoptic treatment.

The Obstetric portion of the book is very good indeed, as one would expect from an obstetrician of Mr. Bourne’s calibre. However I wish someone would have the courage to omit the operations of Symphysiotomy and Pubiotomy from teaching books. I’ve never seen either performed and I’m sure that very few modern obstetricians have seen or performed them. They belong to the pre-history of obstetrics, especially in view of the great development of the lower segment caesarian operation.

Personally, I have never been very partial to medical synopses, and I’m sure that to the student who uses them without a fuller textbook they must present a bewildering mass of disjointed detail.

THE SYMPTOMATIC DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF GYNAECOLOGICAL DISORDERS


Many authors who write for the practising doctor get so caught up in a mass of detail that their books completely fail in their purpose. Not so with Miss Margaret Moore White who has supplied us with a book, not too voluminous, which is eminently suitable for the needs of the general practitioner.

The necessary essentials are concisely dealt with and the doctor who wishes to treat a case of Pruritis, or to interpret pelvic pain, need only refer to the appropriate sections to obtain the information he wants. Miss Moore White has mastered the technique of saying what is necessary and saying it clearly and concisely.

I was particularly struck by the chapter on Contraception. This is a more able treatise than one finds in many larger and more authoritative books. I felt that stress should be laid on the fact that the fitting of contraceptive appliances is highly specialised work and, in my opinion, should be carried out at Clinics. Appliances fitted by comparatively inexpert people so often result in tragic pregnancies. This contraceptive section is written by Miss Mary Redding.

The discussion on pre-operative and post-operative treatment of cases will be a boon to many readers.

THE PROBLEM OF LUPUS VULGARIS


Dr. Aitken has written a most interesting and readable little book about Lupus, well illustrated with many plates in colour and black and white.

He explains in simple terms the evolution and method of spread of the disease, and shows how the face is most commonly affected, and how rarely the condition is associated with phthisis, although more commonly with bone and gland tuberculosis. He demonstrates that the disease often begins in childhood or early adolescence—indeed more than half the cases began during the child’s school life.

The chapter on aetiology establishes the tuberculous nature of the disease and records cases of direct inoculation with the tubercle bacillus, while that on treatment stresses the importance of general treatment and explains amply the classical destructive therapies. Dr. Aitken rightly condemns the use of X-rays, but the reviewer’s personal experience with the hydnocarpate esters has been satisfactory.

There is a detailed chapter on the use of ultra-violet irradiation, explaining the reason for the author’s strong preference for the carbon-arc lamp, and a very interesting chapter on the history and use of tuberculin in Lupus Vulgaris with a warning against the use of general ultra-violet light and tuberculin in the presence of pulmonary tuberculosis. Dr. Aitken is much concerned with the public health and social aspects of the disease and suggests the formation of regional Lupus centres.

It is to be hoped that the recent remarkable work with Calciferol will render Lupus a much more curable and less dreaded disease than it has been, and it is a pity that the book was published just too soon to mention the new treatment.