Examination of Blood for Rhesus Factor and other blood groups.

A number of couples, where the wife has had repeated miscarriages, have been examined for this factor. Incompatibility between husband and wife has not yet been found in cases of very early miscarriage. But in cases when the foetus dies at the fourth month or later Rhesus incompatibility has been found on several occasions.

Results

Of the 336 women comprising the infertile group here discussed, 109 have conceived on one or more occasions since their first visit. Those pregnancies that have terminated have done so as follows:

- 64 Live births (3 of these the result of artificial insemination from donors).
- 4 Still births.
- 33 Miscarriages.
- 36 are at present pregnant.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIALS OF MODERN SURGERY


This well-known book, first published in 1938 and since reprinted in 1940, has been revised under considerable difficulties owing to one co-editor being on active service.

There is a tendency in a book of this character to aim at comprehensiveness to an undue degree, and so we find descriptions of such rare conditions as plague, yaws, blasto-mycosis, and madura foot; whereas a few words on scabies and secondary infection, and ringworm of the groins and toes, would be more useful to the average reader. Similarly, there is the usual chapter on anaesthetics, illustrated from instrument catalogues, of little instructive value; those types of anaesthetic likely to be used by the surgeon himself, such as local or spinal anaesthetic, are very briefly referred to.

In the chapter on burns the authors do not appear to have recognised the latest tendencies in treatment. That on shock and resuscitation is good, though the reviewer was disappointed in his hope of learning how a B.L.B. mask works, and how fast one runs oxygen, etc. Alas, he remains as ignorant as before, though he looked it up in each of the three places where reference to this treatment is made. Moreover, the excuse that experience alone teaches, might refer to most of the subjects dealt with.

The chapter on septic hands and that on venereal diseases are both of outstanding merit, and of themselves would warrant the purchase of this book.

The segregation of venereal diseases no doubt has advantages, but one result is that the average medical student knows little about them, and the fact that none of his examiners nowadays has any recent experience of the treatment of these conditions means that they rarely matter in examinations, but to the young surgeon at sea or in distant lands these subjects may be of the greatest importance, and to every young service medical officer this chapter should be of the greatest help with its lucid descriptions and practical recommendations regarding treatment.

As one would expect, a book compiled by fifteen contributors, must contain some contradictory statements—thus, on p. 852 ligation of the angular vein is recommended, whereas on p. 233 occurs the dogmatic statement “Ligation of the angular vein is quite futile.” A rather disturbingly intolerant statement by an examiner in surgery.

The book is well produced and easily readable, to a degree unusual in a work of this type. Miss Anna Zinkeisen has contributed some delightful coloured illustrations, the artistic merit of which far outweighs their limited didactic value.

This book provides an amazing amount of information on a very wide range of subjects, and should prove a most useful book to all medical students, as well as an extremely usefiul book of reference to those whose undergraduate days are being left behind by an ever widening gap; such men should look at the dates of their present books of reference from time to time. It will come as a shock to many to find their most up-to-date work on surgery was produced ten to twenty years ago, though in their minds it is “only the other day” when they bought it. To such, Handfield-Jones and Porritt have produced the necessary remedy.

FRACTURES AND JOINT INJURIES


Volume II is now available, and fulfils the expectations created by Volume I, which appeared some months ago, and of which a review has already appeared.

The production of this book is quite amazing in wartime. The quality of the paper and print, and the new coloured illustrations, as well as the excellent reproduction of X-ray photographs, fills one with admiration. This volume is numbered consecutively with Volume I, and consists of 513 pages devoted to subject matter. It is stated on the book jacket that there are “745 photographs, X-rays and diagrams, many of which are in colour.” This will give some idea of the lavish way in which this work is produced. Some feel that a review should be a criticism and...
not a eulogy, and for their benefit it is necessary to point out anything that appears to be a defect. The question of one or two volumes for a long work is always a matter of controversy; separate volumes are easier to hold—on the other hand, if one reads in bed or in a train, unless one takes both volumes one usually finds that what one wants is in the other volume. Whether two volumes are a good or a bad thing may be a matter of opinion, but it seems essential that each volume should have an index. A method employed in a popular textbook of surgery that appeared for a time in two volumes was to have one index covering both volumes, the index was published identically at the end of each volume. In the work under review the index is only published at the end of Volume II, and if one has taken Volume I alone to bed or on a journey, one has no index. On the whole, I think the advantages of a single book outweigh those of separate volumes. It is possible, of course, that demand for publication made it necessary to publish what was ready as a first volume, before the whole work was completed, and this would explain the absence of an index in Volume I.

The main outline of the book follows previous editions. The dangers of prolonged weight traction, and the necessity for rapid reduction of deformity, to which Girdlestone recently drew attention, are emphasised here also. In dealing with the extension treatment of fractured femur reference is made to the sliding bed and its considerable advantages, yet in all the illustrations in the chapter on injuries of the thigh it is obvious that the sliding bed is not employed. The reviewer found that the chapters of very satisfactory personal experience of its use, he introduced it into a hospital, it never "caught on," and was kept for nurses' lectures, and the residents did not use it. One wonders why this conservative reaction is so strong, and Figs. 1025 and 1027-28 are therefore particularly interesting as illustrating this outlook.

Nowadays there is a tendency to be unable to work whether as a surgeon or an anaesthetist, without the most elaborate apparatus, the inset picture in Fig. 1035 will come, therefore, as a revelation to those whose experience is limited to well-established hospitals.

There is no need to deal with those descriptions of fractures and other injuries which have been so well dealt with in previous editions, and reappear with little change here. They have become the constant guide of both visiting staff and residents, and surely no higher praise can be given.

A word must be said, however, on "Rehabilitation," a word that has so great an advertisement value for any hospital that in many cases inadequate arrangements are hidden behind this magic word. Many so-called rehabilitation centres do not seem to make any great attempt to render a man fit to return to his previous occupation, and one wonders how much use, and what inspiration a locomotive driver, for instance, finds in making wool mats. Watson-Jones, for example, invents "a gymnasium, is one of the deadliest and soul-destroying activities." Treating the patient as a whole is further shown by the statement "Cycling is another non-weight-bearing exercise of value in knee-joint cases; but it must be emphasised that half-a-dozen bicycles that can be driven through the country are worth scores of fixed pulleys in a gymnasium. Nowadays one is asked "Is your joint really necessary?" If anyone is interested in the setting up of a rehabilitation centre, a journey to see a centre as described in this book would appear to be not only necessary, but essential.

One can predict that this will be the standard work on fractures and joint injuries for many years to come.

**SURGERY OF MODERN WARFARE**


The fact that already this work has reached its third edition in less than five years is sufficient proof of its popularity. The popularity of issuing a book in parts will be disputed by many. There is always the risk that the part one wants is elsewhere, and the absence of an index in the parts so far available is a handicap. The book is superbly illustrated, and the Editor believes in "window dressing" to lure readers to sample his wares. Chapter I, which caused the Editor so much trouble, is really in this category, for it is difficult to see the surgical value of the illustrations of a German machine gun in action, or of the other illustrations and information in this chapter. Nevertheless, I am prepared to defend this window dressing, for I found the work very attractive, and found myself picking up the book with the intention of glancing at it only to find that I had read a chapter or two with complete absorption before I realised what I had done!

Some surgical works are so unattractive that the mere making a resolve to read them is in itself an effort. One notes with amazement that the Medical Director-Generals of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force gave every facility and co-operation, whereas the Army authorities were not only non-co-operative but obstructive. This would appear to be a criticism of the Army medical service rather than a reflection upon this popular work. One cannot help feeling that constructive criticism and willing co-operation would have been more in line with the national effort towards victory.

Coming down to detailed criticism, Chapters VII to XIV need rearrangement and co-ordination. Oxygen therapy is dealt with in Chapter VII, but the reader will only find details of its technique if he pursues his studies to Chapter XIV.

In dealing with blood transfusion, the average reader would probably like to know in simple language a slight explanation of the expression "Rhesus factor," which to many appears a most mysterious rumour!

In Part II, chapters on burns by such authorities as Wakely and McIndoe will prove of the greatest value. The chapter by Bunyan is a bit "sketchy," and the details of irritation rather inadequate.
Fractures and Joint Injuries

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