Book Reviews

SIR CHARLES BELL, HIS LIFE AND TIMES

It has been a pleasure to read and review this interesting book. Charles Bell made notable contributions to anatomy and surgery. This book gives a full account of these, and in addition, describes the medical and surgical life of London at that time. It is apparent that Sir Charles Bell's life was similar in many ways to that of one of the authors, Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, and this may be an added reason why the book is so well written and such a delight to read.

HIGH ARTERIAL PRESSURE

As would be expected from the leader in the treatment of high blood pressure with hypotensive drugs, about half of this large book is devoted to the methods and results of treatment of high blood pressure. This, I think, is the most valuable part, since all the difficulties which can be met with in such treatment are well covered. Like all enthusiasts, however, the effect on the whole patient of such treatment with ganglion-blocking drugs, tends to be regarded as wholly beneficial, whereas there are many patients whose lives have been made quite unpleasant by their use.

The rest of the book consists of a survey of all the factors known to be implicated in the aetiology of high blood pressure. It is a very valuable collection of the references in the field, but equal weight seems to have been given to good, bad and indifferent papers included in the survey, and in such a vast field what the reader needs is a critical guide.

However, over all this is a book which those who are interested in this subject ought to read. The format is good, though the way in which small subsections in the chapters are placed together at the front of the book under the chapter headings did not seem to have much point, since it acted as a second index.

OUTLINE OF ORTHOPAEDICS

The fact that the second edition of Mr. Adams' book appears so soon after the first is a just tribute to its popularity. This book, intended primarily for undergraduate students, sets out clearly the bread and butter information of orthopaedics. For postgraduate students and general practitioners the practical common-sense approach to orthopaedic problems serves as an example. The correlation of clinical and radiological findings in each subject demonstrates the scope and limitation of X-rays in orthopaedics.

In this second edition the chapter on congenital dislocation of the hip has been brought up to date, in particular emphasizing the trend of more frequent operation in early cases.

The length of the book is unaltered, its original purpose conscientiously adhered to. It is the best book of its kind so far produced.

SYSTEMIC OPHTHALMOLGY

This book is valuable to physicians and ophthalmologists, since the care taken in describing general conditions is nicely balanced against that taken with their ophthalmological concomitants. The layout and headings are excellent, the type is clear and high-quality paper is used. The contents include ophthalmological changes due to prenatal influences, inflammations, allergies, nutritional metabolic and endocrine disorders, changes in the central nervous system and the cardiovascular system and finally in a variety of other general disturbances, including senility and death.

There is a distinguished panel of authors, many of whom are acknowledged leaders in the subjects they contribute, a qualification which applies particularly to the author-in-chief, whose chapter on heredity is one of the outstanding features of the book.

The pointing out of a few small faults may help the authors in the inevitable third edition. In the
section on retrolental fibroplasia the primary vasoconstrictive effect of oxygen, demonstrated first by Ashton, Ward and Serpell, is not mentioned. This seems a pity, since it presumably constitutes the basic change from which all the other sequelae develop.

In many sections ocular muscle palsies are described, but it is rare to find mention of the prognosis. It is surprising to find toxoplasmosis described as a yeast infection (page 117). Some of the illustrations are poor, for example Plates VII and X and Figs. 107, 149 and 206. There is a line of text missing on page 160.

In the section on diabetes the ophthalmoscopic visibility of microaneurysms is not admitted; all red dots are described as haemorrhages. There are minor errors in the figures for the eight-year mortality of grade II hypertensives and for the age incidence of temporal arteritis.

On page 309 pre-existing glaucoma is not mentioned as one of the important predisposing causes of retinal venous occlusion and on page 659 senile exfoliation of the lens capsule is still described as such, whereas it has been shown beyond reasonable doubt by Dvorak Theobald and other authors that it is a widespread deposit within the eye without demonstrable abnormality of the capsule.

These are all fairly minor points and detract little from the value of a very excellent book, which can be highly recommended.

R.S.

**EYE SURGERY**


The name of Stallard needs no introduction as an ophthalmic surgeon of the highest international repute. Ever since the first edition of this volume appeared in October 1946 it has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive works in this field. It is essentially designed for the practising ophthalmologist, who will find within the text a clear description of almost all the ophthalmic operations and techniques in current usage.

The book has, in this edition, been thoroughly revised and brought up to date. In particular, the chapters on anaesthesia and corneal transplants bear mention as being the most advanced that I have come across in any book describing eye surgery. The annular corneal transplant in cases of a vascularized recipient cornea makes its appearance for the first time in an ophthalmic textbook.

Like all textbooks on any subject, it is not entirely without its faults. Some statements made dogmatically would not be generally agreed to, but these are few and in a work of this nature inevitable.

The author has made a point of stressing the principles of the surgical treatment of each section before delving into details on technique, another admirable feature of this book.

Finally, the illustrations, although these are practically all in black and white, could not have been better executed or better reproduced.

This volume is one of the classics of ophthalmic literature and deserves its place in all medical libraries, whilst the practising ophthalmologist should not be without it.

**FRACTURES AND DISLOCATIONS**


It was to be expected that a book by Professor Perkins would be distinguished by simple language, by a commonsense approach, by original ideas and by a certain dogmatism. In this book all four of these characteristics are shown. The writing is simple and concise and the book is in consequence a pleasure to read. The time-honoured clichés of fracture treatment have been swept away and their place is taken by an essentially practical and logical mode of thought. This is specially evident in the first 10 sections, which deal in general with fractures and with their complications. The approach to immobilization and the exposition of its function is masterly and this section alone will do much to clarify thought and to rationalize practice.

Of original ideas, the most striking is Professor Perkins’s attempt—following in principle the techniques of Baedeker and of Michelin—to indicate for each fracture the degree of skill required of the doctor treating it. Few will agree with him that the general practitioner can safely and competently deal with a dislocated hip. Orthopaedic surgeons will be disappointed at finding themselves left with missile fractures of the skull, fractures of the maxilla, open fractures of the ribs, fracture-subluxations of the spine, fractures of the scaphoid, and certain fractures of the tibia and ankle. On the other hand, it is certain that much time and expense would be saved and (possibly) some disability avoided if many simple fractures were dealt with by general practitioners. Originality—or at least divergence from accepted practice—is shown also in many of the methods advocated. The reader will know that all the methods described have been subjected to the test of practice and he will constantly be reminded of the primary aim of restoration of function.

A certain amount of dogmatism is, of course, unavoidable in a short textbook, but it is perhaps unfortunate that no mention is made of the fact that abduction fractures of the neck of the femur may occasionally come to grief. A later radiograph may indeed come as a surprise to the surgeon who is unaware of this. Again, many will not agree that general treatment for delayed union should be given simply because it is expected by the public. The existence of other points of view could perhaps have been indicated by the provision of references as guides to further reading.

These small points of criticism really do not