

## REVIEWS.

## ACTINOMYCOSIS.

By ZACHARY COPE, B.A., M.D., M.S.Lond.,  
F.R.C.S.Eng. (Oxford University Press,  
London, New York, Toronto). 1938.  
Price 15/-.

In the preface the author tells us that no monograph on this subject has hitherto been published in English. This omission has been remedied admirably by the publication of Mr. Zachary Cope's book.

The author has already published papers on actinomycosis and, in this country, seems to have had a very nearly unique experience of this disease. It falls to the lot of few surgeons to see many cases, despite the fact that Mr. Cope thinks that infection by this group of organisms is more widespread than is commonly imagined. Whether more cases will be brought to light as a result of the lessons Mr. Cope teaches, cannot be foreshadowed, but the subject has been dealt with in the most comprehensive, lucid and delightful way, which has made this book a pleasure to read.

We would especially draw attention in the first chapter to the photographs of some of the pioneer workers in the natural history of this curious disease. We wish that more authors would publish photographs of this nature, as it seems to bring home to the reader a measure of personal contact with men whose names have now become history.

The description of the pathology is admirable in its simplicity. Although Mr. Cope stresses that the infection may be caused by two organisms, one preferentially anaerobic, the other less common and aerobic, he refuses to divide the various infections due to streptothrices into different categories. They are all to be considered under the heading of actinomycosis.

The book is well printed in large type and some of the illustrations are really beautiful. The only criticism that we would make is that some of the reproductions of the X-rays might be improved, especially Figs. 28 and 29. Also, on p. 29, there is a small grammatical error, which will doubtless be rectified in a second edition. These, however, are small blemishes in an otherwise excellent book, which should be of the greatest use to all those who are interested in this difficult subject.

There is a very comprehensive bibliography, and Mr. Cope's remarks on the fashion of the administration of large doses of iodides are excellent. He points out that while this drug, in all its various forms, undoubtedly has a beneficial effect on the disease, its action is probably not specific and the heroic doses sometimes given would appear to be unnecessary.

Finally, Mr. Cope's views on prognosis will be welcome. In his experience, it is by no means such a fatal and irremediable condition as is commonly thought, as he points out that it is the region attacked which makes the prognosis either grave or favourable.

We congratulate the author on this production, and we recommend it in all sincerity.

## CLINICAL CONTRACEPTION.

By GLADYS M. COX, M.B., B.S., Wm Heinemann Ltd. 1937. Price 7/6  
Second Edition pp. 196.

In these modern days when the patient knows more about contraceptives than the average doctor it beholds the modern practitioner to be *au fait* with the known methods of avoiding conception.

Dr. Gladys Cox's book "Clinical Contraception," is well worth using as a book of reference. Lord Horder in his preface to the book says there is as yet no perfect method. This is only too true, as apart from failures to prevent conception one recollects not a few cases of leucorrhœa and tubal infection resulting from the use of contraceptives.

Nevertheless, however one may disapprove of this use, it is wise to bend to the wishes of the patients and maintain ones moral hold over them by honesty of opinion combined with the most expert and efficient treatment of their desires for the time being. The most potent factor in the production of children is the fear in the woman's mind that she may have none. This fear begins two years after marriage, and also when the patient reaches the age of 30 if no child has arrived by then.

Wise guidance is essential and a display of general knowledge of the subject is the duty of the physician or gynæcologist consulted by the patient.

Dr. Cox's book is an epitome of all that is required and known to date. It contains references to all the most modern authors, a list of contraceptives, chemical and mechanical, with the manufacturers' names and addresses. There is also given a useful list of rules for the patient to observe if she is to achieve success and avoid dangers incident to contraception. In fine it is a most valuable addition to modern medical literature.

### MEDICO-LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE RUXTON CASE.

By JOHN GLAISTER, M.D., D.Sc., Barrister at Law, Regius Professor of Forensic Medicine, University of Glasgow, and JAMES COUPER BRASH, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S.Ed., Professor of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1937. Pp. 284. 21/-.

This book is unique as a monograph for the medico-legal library. In the past have been published the famous series of volumes recording important criminal trials, but never before has a book been produced which deals exclusively with the scientific work in the laboratory with regard to one criminal case, and its presentation in Court.

It is also an outstanding record of a case where the materials produced for investigation demanded the co-operation of a number of experts, each a specialist in his own department. Mention may be made of the medico-legal experts, anatomists, serologists and dental surgeons.

It illustrates well the fact that a medico-legal expert is in himself not sufficient to carry out the necessary thorough investigation, and that many minds, each an expert in his own speciality, should co-operate in unravelling a mysterious problem under the guiding hand of the medico-legal expert.

The Ruxton Case will long remain a *classic* with regard to the identification of human remains, and in this respect, the work which was carried out by the anatomists is unique. It is good that a detailed description of this has been put on permanent record. The work of the dental surgeons also shows what meticulous care was taken in a lengthy and laborious investigation with regard to the teeth and jaws of the two murdered women.

The book is well illustrated, as it should be in such a volume as this, and the whole story of the gradual piecing together of the evidence which was eventually to bring Ruxton to the scaffold reads with extraordinary thrilling interest.

It will be of particular value to those who are engaged in medico-legal work, and should be read by all who are pursuing post-graduate study in forensic medicine.

### A SURVEY OF CHRONIC RHEUMATIC DISEASES.

(Contributed by contemporary authorities in commemoration of the bicentenary of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath, 1738-1938.)

Compiled under the direction of the following editorial committee: R. G. GORDON (Chairman), J. BARNES BURT, R. WATERHOUSE, G. P. R. ALDRED-BROWN, F. J. POYNTON, G. D. KERSLEY. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1938. London, New York, Toronto. Pp. 338, illustrated. Price 18/- net.

The International Congress on Rheumatism and Hydrology has met quite recently, there has been a Trans-Atlantic broadcast on rheumatism, and now Bath, one of the oldest spas in England, has produced a survey of the rheumatic diseases.

Truly, rheumatism, so long neglected, has come into its own at last!

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, better known as the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, finds that it cannot cope with the demands for its services, and that it has become necessary for it to find a new site and new buildings, and in a foreword has been sketched a brief history of the work that has been done within its doors for the last two hundred years.

Thirty contributors have combined to make the survey complete and to the point, and they hail from all over the world, so that an enormous amount of work, and a long time must have been necessary to correlate and co-ordinate their work.

All the problems which continually confront rheumatologists are dealt with here, and the fact that they still are problems is rather a depressing thought, for indeed, although treatment has advanced a long way, essential ætiology still lags behind, and there seems little doubt that an entirely new angle will have to be taken on the rheu-