

to advanced stages and are commonly useless or even misleading in the quest for early diagnosis. There is no single method of treatment appropriate to all kinds of cancer. Correct choice of treatment, upon which the patient's life depends, requires precise knowledge of the type of the tumour, its extent, its usual habits of growth and dissemination, and of concomitant lesions. A diagnosis which is sufficiently early and exact can often be established only by histological examination, and he is a warm advocate of biopsy, and especially of "per-operative" biopsy, in the theatre, with the surgeon prepared to act promptly on the findings. He discusses the knowledge and skill required from surgeon and pathologist to ensure reliable results and the subsequent procedure to minimize the risks of biopsy. Huguenin is impressed by the importance of general and local conditions favouring or impeding the growth and spread of cancers, though dearth of knowledge of these factors precludes, at present, the influence on therapeutics which they may exert in the future. The isolation of French medicine during the war no doubt accounts for the cursory reference to treatment of carcinoma of the prostate by oestrogens, and the author seems to write without personal acquaintance with the method. Personal experience and reflection inform the rest of the book.

L. FOULDS.

ACTION OF DIGITALIS

La Digitale et Les Strophantines. Pharmacodynamie-Thérapeutique. By D. Danielopolu. (Pp. 206; illustrated. No price given.) Paris: Masson et Cie. 1946.

It is interesting to read the opinions of an author from Bucharest on such a subject as the action of digitalis; we learn how different his standpoint is from ours. He does not regard as important the increased force of ventricular contraction that digitalis causes, nor does he discuss its action in depressing conduction in the bundle of His; he says nothing of digitalis causing a reduction in the number of impulses reaching the ventricle from a fibrillating auricle, or of an extra-cardiac action of digitalis whereby increased venous tone reduces the venous pressure at the entrance to the right auricle.

Danielopolu is chiefly concerned with the relation between the digitalis glycosides and acetylcholine, and he shows from a series of experiments that in the presence of strophanthin the effect of acetylcholine and of vagal stimulation is strikingly increased. This augmentation of the action of acetylcholine is seen in both cardiac and many other tissues in the presence of, for example, strophanthin in concentrations which, it must be said, are rather high. Though increased vagal action slows the heart, few to-day consider that vagal slowing is closely connected with the beneficial action of digitalis. However, we tend to overlook the observations made by Lewis, Drury, and Iliescu, which seemed to puzzle those who made them, that when atropine is injected into the vein of a fully digitalized patient with fibrillation there is a sudden large acceleration in the ventricular rate from 70 or 80 to 160 or even 180. There may therefore be more truth in Danielopolu's viewpoint than we usually admit. Increased acetylcholine action may, however, affect more than the heart rate, for it is becoming apparent that all substances which prolong the refractory period and diminish conduction in cardiac muscle are acetylcholine antagonists, and that acetylcholine not merely inhibits the heart but is concerned in the transmission of the contractile process and perhaps in the contractile process itself. If that should prove correct, the importance of the relation between digitalis glycosides and acetylcholine will be firmly established.

J. H. BURN.

Volume LXV of the *Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom* for the session 1945 has been published by J. and A. Churchill at 40s. It comprises full reports of the proceedings of that society at the annual congress held in London in April, 1945; it also includes the Doyné lecture and other papers read before the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress at its thirty-first annual meeting. Among the main subjects dealt with in this volume are ocular sequelae of head injuries; plastic repair of the lids; traumatic detachment of the retina; the sympathizing eye; compression and invasion of the optic nerves and chiasma by neighbouring gliomas (Geoffrey Jefferson's Doyné lecture); injuries to the eyeball; and retrobulbar neuritis (paper by L. E. Werner read to the Irish Ophthalmological Society).

BOOKS RECEIVED

[Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received]

Allergy in Theory and Practice. By R. A. Cooke, M.D., Sc.D., F.A.C.P., et al. (Pp. 572. 40s.) Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders. 1947.

The authors discuss allergy in all its aspects and intend the book for general practitioners as well as specialists.

A Plan for Science. By the Science Advisory Committee of the Communist Party. (Pp. 32. 6d.) Watford: Farleigh Press. 1947.

A memorandum on the application of science to industrial and social problems.

Diseases of the Retina. By H. Elwyn, M.D. (Pp. 587. 45s.) London: Churchill. 1946.

The author discusses disturbances in circulation, vascular malformations, degenerative and inflammatory diseases, tumours, retinal detachment, developmental abnormalities, and radiation injuries.

Le Problème Biologique du Cancer. By J. Delarue. (Pp. 200. 300 francs.) Paris: Masson. 1947.

The author considers the aetiology of cancer, experimental evidence, the pathology and clinical aspects, and the treatment of cancer.

Le Chirurgien en présence de l'État Diabétique. By J. Bréhant. (Pp. 541. 1,200 francs.) Paris: Masson. 1946.

Includes discussion on surgical procedures for diabetic patients, surgical complications of diabetes, surgical treatment of diabetes, and traumatic diabetes.

L'Épilepsie Chronique. By P. Hartenberg. (Pp. 160. 240 francs.) Paris: Masson. 1946.

A monograph on the aetiology and symptomatology of idiopathic epilepsy.

Le Problème des Tuberculoses Atypiques. By R. Burnand, et al. (Pp. 435. 760 francs.) Paris: Masson. 1946.

A collection of studies on atypical tuberculosis, including tuberculosis of the skin and the lungs, and discussion of the anatomy, pathology, and bacteriology.

Le Diabète et sa Pathogénie. By L. Ambard. (Pp. 162. 240 francs.) Paris: Masson. 1946.

A monograph on the pathogenesis, symptomatology, and treatment of diabetes.

Tuberculosis in Newfoundland. By T. O. Garland, M.D., D.P.H., and P. D'Arcy Hart, M.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 58. No price.) Newfoundland: Trade Printers and Publishers. 1946.

A report of an investigation into tuberculosis in Newfoundland, where the disease is particularly widespread.

Anatomy and Physiology. By C. F. V. Smout, M.D. 2nd ed. (Pp. 470. 30s.) London: Edward Arnold. 1947.

This book is planned in accordance with the syllabus of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and is intended for students of massage and medical gymnastics.

La Psychologie de L'Intelligence. By Jean Piaget. (Pp. 212. 80 francs.) Paris: Armand Colin. 1947.

After discussing intelligence in adaptive processes the author considers its relation to perception, habit, and in the elaboration of thought.

Studies on the Influenza A-Epidemic of January-March, 1941, at Groningen (Holland). By J. A. R. Van Bruggen, M.D., et al. (Pp. 79. 10s.) Leiden: Stenfert Kroese.

A monograph on an influenza epidemic in Holland, with photographs, from the Leiden Institute of Preventive Medicine. In English.

A History of the Worcester Royal Infirmary. By W. H. McMenemey, M.A. (Pp. 356. 21s.) London: Press Alliances. 1947.

The author stresses the value of democratic management and local enterprise as well as the need for nation-wide planning.

Heparin in the Treatment of Thrombosis. By J. E. Jorpes, M.D. 2nd ed. (Pp. 260. 18s.) Oxford University Press: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1946.

A survey of the chemistry, mode of action, and therapeutic uses of heparin for the physiologist and physician.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Election of Two Members of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine by the General Medical Electorate

An election of two members of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine will be held on Wednesday, June 4. The members elected will come into office on the first day of Michaelmas Term, 1947, and will hold office, the senior for two years and the junior for one year from that day. The General Medical Electorate consists of all Oxford graduates in medicine who are members of Convocation. The Board of the Faculty of Medicine includes two members elected by the General Medical Electorate who must be members of that body and of whom one at least must be a person engaged in teaching one or more of the clinical subjects of the Faculty. Nominations of duly qualified candidates for election will be received by the secretary of Faculties at the University Registry, Oxford, up to 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 14. Each nomination must be signed by six members of the General Medical Electorate, and no candidate will be eligible whose nomination has not been received by that date.

The Electors have awarded the George Herbert Hunt Travelling Scholarship to Selwyn Francis Taylor, B.M., M.Ch., of Keble College.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Sir Howard Florey, M.D., F.R.S., professor of pathology in the University of Oxford, will deliver the British Association's Radford Mather Lecture in Regent House, on Friday, May 2, at 5 p.m. His subject is: "Penicillin and other Antibiotics."

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

A course of six public lectures on "Cell Physiology and Pharmacology" will be given by Dr. J. F. Danielli in the Department of Pharmacology of University College on Fridays, at 5.15 p.m., from April 25 to May 30. Admission is free and without ticket.

University College Hospital Medical School

A revision course of three weeks' duration in preparation for the examination for the Diploma in Anaesthetics will be held at University College Hospital Medical School beginning on Monday, April 21. The course is comprehensive in scope, including anatomy, physiology, applied physics, and pharmacology, and is limited to 25 members. The fee is £21 inclusive. Applications to join should be addressed to the secretary, University College Hospital Medical School, University Street, W.C.1.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

Profs. C. P. Beattie and C. H. Stuart-Harris have been appointed representatives of the University at the fourth International Congress of Microbiology to be held at Copenhagen from July 20 to 26.

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

Prof. G. Grey Turner, M.S., F.R.C.S., will give the first Rutherford Morison Lecture in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Thursday, May 29, at 5.15 p.m. His subject is "Rutherford Morison and his Achievement in Surgery."

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

Election of Professors and Lecturers

The Council of the College invites applications for election to the office of Hunterian Professor, Arris and Gale Lecturer, Arnott Demonstrator and Erasmus Wilson Demonstrator for the ensuing year. The twelve Hunterian Lectures are delivered by Fellows or Members of the College. The three Arris and Gale Lectures are on subjects relating to human anatomy and physiology, the six Arnott Demonstrations on the contents of the Museum, and the six Erasmus Wilson Demonstrations on the pathological contents of the Museum. Applications in writing must reach the assistant secretary of the College (Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.) by April 28. Candidates for the Hunterian Professorships and the Arris and Gale Lectureships are requested to submit with their applications twenty copies of a synopsis of approximately 500 words describing the subject matter of their proposed lecture. In the case of Hunterian Lectures the Council is prepared to consider applications for either a series of lectures or a single lecture. Lecturers will be appointed subject to the condition of giving the College first refusal of publishing their lectures in the *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons*.

Practical demonstrations in anatomy, applied physiology and pathology have been arranged by Profs. F. Wood Jones, John Beattie, and R. A. Willis, beginning on Monday, July 7, and continuing until Tuesday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. daily. The fee is £21, and the closing date for

applications is May 12. The demonstrations will be open to those attending the main course of lectures to be held in July and September and will be limited to 40 students; preference will be given to those unable to obtain practical instruction elsewhere and to ex-Service men. Applications, accompanied by a cheque for £21, should be sent to the assistant secretary, Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.

Medico-Legal

REMUNERATION OF AGENCY NURSES

[FROM OUR MEDICO-LEGAL CORRESPONDENT]

The Nurses Act, 1943, made "nurses' co-operations" subject to licensing and inspection by local authorities. Section 8 (2) provides that in licensing an agency for the supply of nurses a local authority may attach such conditions to the licence "as they may think fit for securing the proper conduct of the agency." In renewing the licences in the London area this year, the London County Council attached a number of new conditions. These prohibited an agency from charging a client more than the rates laid down in schedules attached to the licence, and also from removing a nurse from service without giving reasonable time to replace her.

Mr. Lewis Miller, the proprietor of the London and District Nursing Association, which supplies about 400 nurses a year, appealed to the Clerkenwell Petty Sessions on the ground that the new conditions were illegal. His counsel, Mr. G. R. Blanco White, K.C., pointed out in the course of his argument that if the salary limits were valid a trained nurse of fifteen years' experience would get £5 3s. 10d. a week against the £6 1s. earned by a bricklayer's labourer. Mr. C. Erskine Simes, K.C., for the Council, said that it was merely imposing a scale which had been agreed upon by the employees and representatives of various nursing bodies and by the Minister of Health, and which was a reasonable scale. Mr. Bertram Reece, the stipendiary magistrate, giving judgment on March 31, said that in his view—"only a temporary view"—the conditions were *ultra vires* of the Act, unreasonable, and against the public interest. He allowed the appeal and awarded 125 guineas costs against the L.C.C.

The issues in this case affect about 20,000 nurses, half of them in London, and raise fundamental questions concerning the proper place of agencies in the system of staffing hospitals up and down the country. Comment would be out of place until the appeal has been finally settled by the High Court, the Court of Appeal, or the House of Lords, all of which are open to the parties at successive stages.

A DEATH FROM PETHIDINE

The Westminster coroner inquired on March 28 into a death due to an overdose of pethidine (the hydrochloride of the ethyl ester of 1-methyl 4-phenylpiperidine 4-carboxylic acid). A clerk of 44 was found unconscious in a Paddington hotel and died soon afterwards. Four bottles of 3/4-gr. (50 mg.) tablets, from which 54 tablets were missing, were found in his room. Dr. G. Roche Lynch said in evidence that this was the first fatal case of pethidine poisoning he had met. The drug has an action similar to that of morphine. As it was discovered to produce addiction in some cases it was placed under the Dangerous Drugs Act in February last.

The Services

Lieut.-Col. W. H. Crichton, C.I.E., I.M.S., has been appointed a Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau (with swords) for services when Director of Public Health and Welfare with 21 Army Group, B.L.A.

NAVAL MEDICAL COMPASSIONATE FUND

A meeting of the subscribers to the Naval Medical Compassionate Fund will be held at the Medical Department of the Navy, 64, St. James's Street, London, S.W.1, on Friday, April 25, at 3 p.m., to elect six directors of the fund.