

Memoranda : MEDICAL, SURGICAL, OBSTETRICAL.

INCONTINENCE OF URINE AFTER CHILDBIRTH.

A DISTINGUISHED gynaecologist has recently deplored his inability to cure the troublesome incontinence of urine which sometimes follows childbirth, especially when instrumental delivery has been required. It would therefore seem opportune to draw attention to the value of electricity in this condition, where the patients are much annoyed by the escape of urine when coughing or laughing, or, indeed, on any sudden movement.

After considerable experience of such cases I can confidently commend a continuous current of 3 to 5 milliamperes passed for three to five minutes through an appropriate copper electrode introduced into the urinary canal, and repeated on alternate days over a period of one or two weeks. The condition occurs also in unmarried women, and the same method of treatment is here equally and even more rapidly successful.

Glasgow.

W. F. SOMERVILLE, M.D.

CYANOSIS DURING OPERATION, DUE TO A MEMBRANOUS EPIGLOTTIS.

I WAS recently removing the tonsils of a woman, aged about 30 years, and had just taken out the left one, when the patient's breathing became very difficult, and she gradually became completely cyanosed. This was remarkable in the circumstances, because the jaw was well forward the whole time, the head back, and the tongue held out of the mouth by the anaesthetist with a sharp pointed tongue clip. Very little blood had escaped into the pharynx, and none had been allowed to accumulate; swabbing over the larynx produced only a little blood-stained mucus. The anaesthetist, Dr. B. B. Sharp, had withheld any further anaesthesia while it was still quite light, owing to the fact that the breathing seemed somewhat laboured. The heart and lungs had previously been examined and found normal.

Artificial respiration had the effect of forcing a little residual air out of the chest, but there was no re-entry. Instead of improving under this treatment, the patient grew worse. At this point I examined the larynx with the finger, and found that the epiglottis was entirely devoid of cartilage, and was of the consistency of a soft piece of wash-leather. It was lying right over the larynx and in tight contact with the posterior pharyngeal wall, to which it was adhering by means of sticky mucus. It was thus acting as a valve, permitting a little air to escape from the chest but none to enter. On hooking the epiglottis forward with my finger, the patient took several deep breaths and became quite pink again.

It would have been quite possible to grasp the epiglottis with a tonsil volsellum and hold it forwards, but as the presence of such an instrument in the mouth for other purposes than its own renders the removal of a tonsil and the tying of the vessels very difficult, I continued the operation without artificial aid, stopping at intervals to hold up the epiglottis whenever the respiration became laboured.

It is possible that some unexplained deaths under anaesthesia may be due to this cause, which may have remained undiscovered *post mortem*, for I notice that the consistency of the epiglottis is not then usually examined. Even if it were, its valve-like action in preventing respiration might not be apparent after death.

I should like to suggest that, in every case where otherwise unexplained dyspnoea occurs during anaesthesia, the larynx be examined digitally; as I am quite sure that had this not been done in this case immediate tracheotomy would have been necessary, and, as it happens, effective. But it is not desirable to perform tracheotomy without a demonstrable and irremovable cause for obstruction in the larynx, pharynx, or mouth; which makes such an examination all the more necessary.

H. M. WHARRY, F.R.C.S.,
Laryngologist, Mount Vernon Hospital
for Diseases of the Chest.

Reviews.

THE COMMON NEUROSES.

Dr. Ross is to be congratulated on having produced in his book on *The Common Neuroses*¹ a volume handy in size and essentially readable in style, wherein the practitioner may find a useful guide to the treatment of many of his patients. Here are no abstruse discussions of psychological theories, no bewildering confusion of psychological terminology, but a plain statement of experience which anyone can understand. After an informing introductory chapter psychological views as to the etiology of the neuroses are briefly and simply discussed. Stress is rightly laid on the emotional reactions of the patient and a clarifying distinction is drawn between the neuroses and the psychoses. A simple, and therefore acceptable, classification is given into neurasthenia, hysteria, and the compulsion neuroses. The symptoms and diagnosis of neurasthenia are next considered in two chapters, which are short but full of wise observation, and fruitful in practical deductions. The general treatment and the treatment of special symptoms are next carefully described, and it is well to note that there is nothing here which is not within the competence of any general practitioner to carry out, given only the necessary time and patience.

The Freudian method is discussed, and while the author pays a deserved tribute to Freud for his pioneer work the dangers of the method of psycho-analysis and its possible therapeutic shortcomings are pointed out. It is especially interesting to note the importance attached by the author to the value of work, and he is equally right in dismissing as a grossly exaggerated factor the excuse of overwork as a cause of the neuroses.

The author's treatment of the subject of hysteria is practical and the negativism of the hysteric is emphasized. We are interested to note that he is no believer in the reflex paralysis of Babinski and Froment, of which so much was heard during the war; thus does he confirm the suspicions with which this doctrine was received by many, who, however, hardly felt equal to contradicting authorities so eminent. Dr. Ross favours the removal of the somatic symptoms of hysteria, such as paralysis, by direct suggestion coupled with explanation, and wisely insists on the importance of the physician being in a position to devote enough time to his first sitting. This treatment is, however, preliminary to the treatment of the underlying mental state, a matter of greater difficulty.

The book as a whole may be commended as a sane and balanced exposition of the views of one of wide experience. No doubt it will not find favour with those whose ideas are firmly set in one or other special psychological groove, but the student may learn a great deal from its pages and be grateful to Dr. Ross for clarifying much that has been made obscure. There are scattered throughout the book such *obiter dicta* as "Beware of praise from the hysteric," which add to the interest of the text and impress its lessons on the reader.

A TEXTBOOK OF MIDWIFERY.

Dr. FITZGIBBON has followed the example of his two immediate predecessors in the Mastership of the Rotunda Hospital in publishing a book on midwifery. As the name, *Practical Midwifery*,² indicates, he deals mainly with the practical aspects of the subject. Had he done so exclusively the book might have been more useful to the class of readers it addresses; his descriptions of the early ovum and placentation are so abbreviated that one not already familiar with the subject may find it very difficult to follow.

Dr. Fitzgibbon deals very fully and elaborately with the whole subject of normal pregnancy and labour. In his introduction he states: "Ninety per cent. of cases will be found to be normal, and interference will result in

¹ *The Common Neuroses: their Treatment by Psychotherapy.* By T. A. Ross, M.D., F.R.C.P.E. London: Edward Arnold and Co. 1923. (Demy 8vo, pp. xi+255. 12s. 6d. net.)

² *Practical Midwifery.* By Gibbon Fitzgibbon, M.D., B.Ch., B.A.O. Dub. Univ., F.R.C.P.I., L.M., Master, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1923. (Demy 8vo, pp. 534; 175 figures. 16s. net.)

Universities and Colleges.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

In accordance with a Grace approved by the Senate on June 8th, 1923, confirming a report of the Special Board for Medicine, important changes in the regulations for medical and surgical degrees will come into force in October next. Copies of the regulations and schedules may be obtained from the Registry of the University. The main features of the new regulations will be noted in the section on the University of Cambridge in the annual Educational Number of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, published next week.

The following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.—R. A. Anderson, J. M. Ghosh, M. R. Goverdhan, K. K. Shenai, J. H. Spencer, K. S. Thakur, F. R. Thornton.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

THE Epsom Scholarship tenable in the Faculty of Medical Sciences has been awarded to Mr. G. G. Gillam.

The Services.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR-GENERAL, R.N.

SURGEON REAR-ADMIRAL JOSEPH CHAMBERS, C.B., C.M.G., has been selected for the post of Medical Director-General, R.N., and will take up office on October 1st. He is succeeded as officer in charge of the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth, by Surgeon Rear-Admiral Arthur Gaskell, C.B., O.B.E.

K.C.V.O.

THE King has been pleased to promote Surgeon Captain A. R. Bankart, C.V.O., R.N., to be a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES.

Lieut.-Colonel James Edward Carter, R.A.M.C. (retired), died of septic poisoning at Machynlleth, North Wales, on July 27th, aged 58. He was born at Loughally, Armagh, on April 23rd, 1865, the son of the late Rev. H. B. Carter, D.D., of Derryloran, Cookstown, Tyrone, and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated M.B., B.Ch., and B.A.O. in 1889; he took the D.P.H. in 1902. Entering the army as surgeon on January 31st, 1901, he became major on December 2nd, 1905, and retired on December 2nd, 1913. He was recalled to the active list for service in the late war on August 5th, 1914, and promoted to lieutenant-colonel on May 25th, 1919. He also served in the South African war in 1899-1900, and took part in the advance on Kimberley, including the actions at Modder River and Magersfontein, and in the operations in the Orange Free State, including the ten-day action of Paardeberg, February 17th to 28th, 1900, in which he was severely wounded; and received the Queen's medal with two clasps.

Major William MacDowall MacDowall, R.A.M.C., died suddenly at Middlesbrough, Yorkshire, on board the British India s.s. *Mandala*, on June 22nd, aged 51. He was the only son of James MacDowall, Esq., of Crouch End; he was educated at the London Hospital, and took the diplomas of M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. Lond. in 1901. After serving as surgeon on the Natal Direct line of steamers, and as assistant medical officer at Hoxton House Asylum, he entered the R.A.M.C. as lieutenant on August 31st, 1903, and became major on February 28th, 1915. He served in the recent great war, and acted as lieutenant-colonel from April, 1917, to August, 1919.

Medical News.

THE annual Westminster Hospital old students' dinner will be held on Thursday, October 4th, at the Empire Rooms, Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W. Mr. W. G. Spencer will be in the chair. The honorary secretary is Dr. Adolphe Abrahams, 17, Harley Street.

PROFESSOR CIRO CALDERA has been appointed to the chair of oto-rhino-laryngology in the University of Pavia.

POST-GRADUATE courses on dermatology and venereal diseases will be held in Paris at the museum of the St. Louis Hospital and the amphitheatre of the clinic, 40, Rue Bichat; the course on dermatology will commence on October 5th, and that on venereology on November 14th. The courses will be conducted under the direction of Professor Jeanselme, with the co-operation of Professor Sébilleau, Dr. Gougerot, Dr. Sabouraud, and others. The fee for each course is 150 francs. A detailed programme will be sent on request.

THE Spanish Congress of Pediatrics will be held at San Sebastian from September 2nd to 7th, under the presidency of Dr. Arquellada.

THE famous histologist, Professor Camillo Golgi of Pavia, has recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

THE twenty-ninth congress of the Italian Society of Internal Medicine will be held in Rome, under the presidency of Professor V. Ascoli, from October 24th to 26th, when the following subjects will be discussed: (1) Diabetes insipidus, introduced by Professor Ascoli Maurizio; (2) cholelithiasis, with special reference to pancreatitis and infection of the bile ducts, introduced by Professor Schupfer Ferrucio (conjoint meeting with Italian Society of Surgery); (3) progress in diagnosis and treatment of heart disease, introduced by Professor Barlocco Amerigo. Further information can be obtained from the secretary of the congress, Professor Giuseppe Sabatini, Clinica Medica, Policlinico Umberto I, Rome.

THE Board of Trade's referee has ruled that formaldehyde be excluded from the list of articles chargeable with duty under Part I of the Safeguarding of Industries Act.

THE thirtieth congress of the Italian Society of Surgery will be held in Rome from October 24th to 26th, when the following subjects will be discussed: (1) Infections of the gall bladder, with special reference to pancreatitis, introduced by Professor Muscatello. (2) Infections of the large bile ducts, introduced by Professor Crosti. (3) Grafting in general, including skin grafts, introduced by Professor Fasiano. (4) Nerve grafts, introduced by Professor Chiasserini. Further information can be obtained from the secretary of the congress, Professor Leonardo Dominici, Clinica Chirurgica, Policlinico Umberto I, Rome.

THE Health Commissioner of Chicago has refused to license a parents' clinic for the purpose of giving information concerning the control of conception. The mayor, on appeal, refused to interfere with the Health Commissioner's decision, and the whole question has been submitted to the corporation counsel for a legal opinion.

THE second congress of the Italian Society of Urology will be held in Rome on October 27th, when the following subjects will be discussed: (1) Functional examination of the kidneys, introduced by Professors Pirondini and Raimoldi. (2) Roentgenotherapy in urology, introduced by Professors Busi and Bonamone. (3) Radiotherapy in urology, introduced by Professor Cassanello. Further information can be obtained from the secretary of the society, Professor Mingazzini, Clinica Chirurgica, Policlinico Umberto I, Rome.

THE thirty-eighth annual report of the Trudeau Sanatorium, Saranac Lake, New York, records that 450 patients were treated last year, of whom 322 were discharged. The patients discharged were classified as follows: apparently arrested, 50 cases; disease quiescent, 155; disease improved, 29; unimproved or failed, 43; diagnosis doubtful (suspected tuberculosis), 22; cases found to be non-tuberculous, 21. Two patients died.

IN his annual report on the work of the Shanghai Public Health Department for 1922 Dr. C. Noel Davis, Commissioner of Public Health, records that the outbreak of small-pox which started in 1921 continued until the following April. The campaign of vaccination was carried on with great vigour, and the effect began to be seen early in the year, when the outbreak waned, and only a few sporadic cases occurred after the end of March.

A REPORT on plague in Egypt during the year 1922 has been issued by the Department of Public Health of the Ministry of the Interior. The total number of cases of plague was 487, including 25 foreigners; the deaths numbered 228, including those of 15 foreigners. The cases and deaths were distributed fairly evenly between Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt.

THE eleventh annual report of the medical department of the United Fruit Company, issued from the general office of the company at Boston, Massachusetts, is a sumptuous publication of nearly 150 pages. In the course of his introductory letter Dr. W. E. Deeks records that in August, 1922, the United Fruit Company inaugurated a free medical wireless service and consultation with its hospitals and steamships and all ships at sea. The announcement of this service was translated into French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and distributed to merchant shipping throughout the world. It was established primarily for the benefit of ships not carrying doctors; but ship's surgeons may consult by wireless with the company's doctors, either aboard ship or ashore. Radiograms requesting medical advice have a special code prefix, and are given preference over all other messages except SOS calls through the wireless service of the United Fruit Company and its subsidiary companies.

THE *Times* of August 23rd states that the *Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift*, the *Münchener medizinische Wochenschrift*, and the *Klinische Wochenschrift* have suspended publication owing to the exorbitant costs of production.