

FIFTY YEARS OF THE R.C.S.

Royal College of Surgeons of England. A Record of the Years from 1901 to 1950. (Pp. 80. Paper covers, 5s.; bound in maroon book-cloth with gold lettering, 8s. 6d.) London: Royal College of Surgeons of England. 1951.

This little book of eighty pages gives a brief history of the Royal College of Surgeons for the first fifty years of this century, followed by short lives of the sixteen presidents "who have directed its policy during those years." The record cannot fail to be of interest to all associated with the College, and certainly every Fellow should possess a copy.

In 1900 the College was a dignified and respected body which conducted examinations and possessed a magnificent museum and an excellent though usually almost deserted library; there was a minimal amount of research done, and only a small amount of teaching beyond the annual eponymic lectures. Now the College has a constantly used and thronged library, splendid research departments, crowded classrooms where renowned professors instruct eager students drawn from all parts of the Commonwealth, and a beautifully equipped hostel where some of the students live. This booklet tells you how this change came about and who were those responsible for the changes.

Each of the lives of the presidents is a thought-provoking success story, and the reader may find some interest in estimating what factors most contributed to the attainment of this exalted position. The only common factors appear to be great natural ability and the will to succeed. It will be noted, however, that those most responsible for the recent increase in usefulness and prestige of the College possessed remarkable administrative ability and fertility of resource. We wish it had been possible to precede the life of every president by a photograph of the subject of the memoir.

Those who are fond of facts will be interested to know that the average age at which the presidency has been attained is 62.4 years. Though some presidents were regarded as delicate, the average length of life was over 75 years. We do not think that every Fellow could say which president was born at sea and later became consulting surgeon to the Navy; and we are sure it would surprise many to learn how seldom a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge University attained the presidency of the Royal College of Surgeons.

V. ZACHARY COPE.

Since its discovery in 1922 vitamin E has been the object of considerable research on the part of the physician and the chemist. In 1941 Merck and Co. published an annotated bibliography of work on the subject prior to 1940, and Distillation Products Industries (a division of the Eastman Kodak Company) have now made available a similar bibliography to cover the years 1940-50, during which period there were published more than 1,500 scientific papers and patents concerned with vitamin E. This *Annotated Bibliography of Vitamin E, 1940 to 1950* (Distillation Products Industries, Rochester, 3, N.Y., U.S.A. 184 pp. \$3. 1950) is classified by subjects, and the brief abstracts accompanying most of the references emphasize the physiological effects of vitamin E rather than its chemical aspects and clinical application. An author index is provided. The book is reproduced by a photo-offset process.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received

Venereal Diseases. By R. C. L. Batchelor, M.A., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., F.R.C.S.Ed., M.R.C.P.Ed., and M. Murrell, M.B., B.S., D.P.H., F.R.C.S.Ed., M.R.C.S. (Pp. 217. 12s. 6d.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1951.

Applied Anatomy for Nurses. By E. J. Bocock, S.R.N., S.C.M., D.N., and R. W. Haines, M.B., D.Sc., F.L.S. (Pp. 320. 15s.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1951.

The Essentials of Modern Surgery. Edited by R. M. Handfield-Jones, M.C., M.S., F.R.C.S., and Sir Arthur E. Porritt, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., M.A., M.Ch., F.R.C.S. 4th ed. (Pp. 1,263. 55s.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1951.

A. F. Holleman's Organic Chemistry. Revised by J. P. Wibaut. (Pp. 660. 55s.) London: Elsevier Publishing Company. 1951.

And They Shall Walk. The life story of Sister Elizabeth Kenny. (Pp. 267. 15s.) London: Robert Hale. 1951.

Ambulation. By K. A. Dening, B.S., M.Ed., F. S. Deyoe, Jun., B.S., and A. B. Ellison, B.S. (Pp. 188. 27s. 6d.) London: Mayflower Publishing Company. 1951.

Diseases of Infancy and Childhood. By W. Sheldon, M.D., F.R.C.P. 6th ed. (Pp. 812. 40s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1951.

Clinical Tropical Medicine. Edited by R. B. H. Gradwohl, M.D., and others. (Pp. 1,647. 160s.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1951.

The Common Sense of Science. By Dr. J. Bronowski. (Pp. 154. 8s. 6d.) London: William Heinemann. 1951.

Your Hayfever and What To Do About It. By H. Swartz, M.D., F.A.C.A. (Pp. 182. 21s. 6d.) New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co.

The Electrical Activity of the Nervous System. By M. A. B. Brazier, B.Sc., Ph.D. (Pp. 220. 25s.) London: Sir Isaac Pitman. 1951.

The Mode of Action of Anaesthetics. By T. A. B. Harris, M.B., B.S., D.A., F.F.A.R.C.S. (Pp. 768. 42s.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1951.

Pharmacology and Therapeutics. By A. Grollman, Ph.D., M.D., F.A.C.P. (Pp. 828. 70s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1951.

IV^e Congrès Neurologique International. Vol. 3. (Pp. 505. No price.) Paris: Masson. 1951.

Les Principales Positions Utilisées en Radiographie. By L. Delherm and H. Morel Kahn. 3rd revised ed. (Pp. 290. 1,800 francs.) Paris: Librairie Maloine. 1951.

11^e et 12^e Sessions de Conférences du Comité International de Médecine et de Pharmacie Militaires. (Pp. 120. No price.) Liège: Office International de Documentation de Médecine Militaire. 1951.

Les Xanthomatoses. By A.-L. Froehlich (Pp. 311. No price.) Brussels: Acta Medica Belgica. 1951.

Estados Endocrinopáticos Agudos. By Dr. M. T. Torm. (Pp. 134. No price.) Barcelona: Byp. 1951.

Hirnatrophische Prozesse im Mittleren Lebensalter. By Dr. F. W. Bronisch. (Pp. 105 M. 12.60.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme. 1951.

Meister der Chirurgie und die Chirurgenschulen im Deutschen Raum. By Professor H. Killian and G. Krämer. (Pp. 232. M. 24.80.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme. 1951.

French medical world celebrated his scientific jubilee and collected funds for a "Prix Emile Brumpt," to be awarded to outstanding workers in parasitology and tropical medicine.—C. A. H.

Group Captain ROBERT ANDREW GEORGE ELLIOTT, until recently medical superintendent of Stoke Mandeville Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Aylesbury, died at his home on October 5. He graduated M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O. from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1913, having completed his clinical studies at Dr. Steevens's Hospital in that city. He served in the 1914 war in the R.F.C. at Uxbridge Hospital, Egypt, and Aden. On his retirement from the R.A.F. he was appointed medical superintendent of the Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Walton, Liverpool, and not long afterwards medical superintendent of Stoke Mandeville Ministry of Pensions Hospital, now taken over by the Ministry of Health. His medical career was mainly occupied in an administrative capacity—for which he was eminently suited. He upheld all that was best in his profession and achieved efficiency at all times. Ready at any time to give helpful advice should any difficulty arise, he was loyal to his staff, and in return commanded their complete trust and respect. His loss is felt by all his many lifelong friends, who extend their sincere sympathy to his widow and son.—G. S.

Medico-Legal

AN ALCOHOLIC WIFE

[FROM OUR MEDICO-LEGAL CORRESPONDENT]

Mr. Commissioner Blanco White recently had before him in the Divorce Court¹ a petition for divorce by a husband alleging constructive desertion by his wife on the ground that she had driven him to leave her by her drinking habits.

To constitute desertion within the meaning of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1950, there must be, as in the case of the Act of 1937 which the Act of 1950 replaces, both the fact of separation and an intention of the deserting party to bring the matrimonial cohabitation to an end. In the case of *Williams v. Williams*² it was established by the Court of Appeal that as a matter of law a certified lunatic could not have such an intention, and that accordingly, although the husband in that case had originally deserted his wife, the period of desertion ceased when he was certified.

Mr. Commissioner Blanco White found in the case before him that the wife had had no intention to drive her husband out of the home, and that therefore she had not deserted him.

He added that, although the husband knew his wife was an alcoholic and must have been warned by her doctors, he allowed her while on holiday in France to drink wine and champagne, cocktails and martinis, which was regrettable behaviour on his part. But this did not affect the question of the wife's intention to drive him away except by making attacks of acute alcoholism more likely.

As a matter of law, provided the fact of separation and the intention of the guilty party to bring cohabitation to an end are present, it does not matter which party goes and which stays behind. It is the intention of the guilty party which is the crux of the matter. And it is paradoxical that a condition of chronic alcoholism or insanity, which at first sight would appear to justify the innocent party in leaving the other, far from facilitating divorce on the ground of desertion, will in all probability make it impossible by depriving the deserter of the necessary intention.

¹ *Evening Standard*, June 18.

² [1939], p. 365.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Vice-Chancellor (Sir Lionel Whitby) and Professor A. Leslie Banks have been appointed two of the University's representatives at the Conference of Home Universities to be held on December 14 and 15.

In Congregation on October 27 Dr. E. D. Adrian, O.M., P.R.S., Master of Trinity College, was appointed a Manager of the E. G. Fearnside Fund until December 31, 1953.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

On October 26 the William Mackenzie Medal was awarded to Mr. H. B. Stallard for valuable contributions to ophthalmology.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The Semon Lecture for 1951 entitled "Articulatory Defects in Aphasia" will be delivered by Dr. Macdonald Critchley, Dean of the Institute of Neurology, the National Hospital, Queen Square, London, W.C., at the Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, London, W., on Thursday, November 1, at 5 p.m. The lecture is addressed to students of the University and to others interested in the subject. Admission is free, without ticket.

Dr. Ruth Bowden has been appointed to the University Chair of Anatomy tenable at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, from October 1.

Dr. Richard John Harrison has been appointed Head of the Department of Anatomy at London Hospital Medical College, and the title of Reader in Anatomy has been conferred on him in respect of this post.

The following candidates have been approved at the examinations indicated.

ACADEMIC POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PATHOLOGY.—J. G. Azzopardi, R. Cassel, I. M. Chaudhri, O. L. C. Cookson, R. D. Eastham, G. M. Edington, P. I. A. Hendry, Roberta G. Horsley, Thelma M. Hunt, G. Kemble Welch, Margaret K. B. Knox, J. Kohn, K. A. Monsur, R. Mortimer, A. M. Mukherjee, P. O'Connell, B. D. P. Rao, G. K. Tiagi.

EXTERNAL DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PATHOLOGY.—F. E. Aaron, M. C. Botha, A. J. E. Brafield, F. G. L. Brafield, N. J. H. Davidson, M. Rahman, R. C. Woodcock.

The following candidates at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have been approved at the examination indicated:

ACADEMIC POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC HEALTH.—J. G. S. Holman, F. G. Sembeguya.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

The following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

FINAL M.B., Ch.B.—*Part I*: Cicely G. Brenner, T. R. W. Cowell, W. Deighton, M. A. R. Eslick, C. D. Fisher, Winifred M. Jones, J. H. Leavesley, I. V. Lishman, Eleanor C. Lloyd, M. Pearson, D. F. Rice, Margaret J. Ringham, Eileen M. Shuttleworth, A. M. Stewart, T. J. Walsh, Mary B. Woodfield, P. J. J. Wren.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH

At the annual meeting of the College held on October 17, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: *President*, Professor Walter Mercer. *Vice-President*, Mr. W. Quarry Wood. *Secretary and Treasurer*, Mr. J. J. Mason Brown. *Representative on the General Medical Council*, Sir Henry Wade. *Conservator of Museum*, Mr. J. N. J. Hartley. *Convener of Museum Committee*, Mr. John Bruce. *Librarian*, Dr. Douglas Guthrie.

The Liston Victoria Jubilee Prize, which is awarded to the Fellow of the College who has made the greatest practical contribution to surgery in the previous four years, was presented to Dr. John Gillies.

The following candidates, having passed the requisite examinations, were admitted Fellows: J. Broadfoot, N. A. G. Covell, P. K. Devi, P. P. Goel, W. R. Grant, J. W. L. Haddon, K. M. Kamodia, T. W. H. Lamont, B. T. le Roux, R. Misra, R. D. Muckart, K. McLay, R. Prasad, T. K. Whaley, R. J. Wilson.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Dr. Leonard Abrahamson has been re-elected President of the College and Dr. G. T. O'Brien Vice-president.

Friday

- BRITISH INSTITUTE OF RADIOLOGY, 32, Welbeck Street, London, W.—November 16, 5 p.m., meeting of medical members.
- BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL FEDERATION.—At London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, Gower Street, W.C., November 16, 5.30 p.m., "*Adrenal Hormones and A.C.T.H.*," by Professor F. G. Young, F.R.S.
- FACULTY OF RADIOLOGISTS.—November 16, joint meeting of the Therapy Section with the Section of Radiology, Royal Society of Medicine, in connexion with the Royal Cancer Hospital Centenary, 1851–1951. (1) At Royal Cancer Hospital, Fulham Road, London, S.W., 2.30 p.m., demonstrations arranged by Professor D. W. Smithers; (2) At Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, London, W., 8.15 p.m., papers: "*Cancer of the Breast and the Menopause*," by Professor D. W. Smithers; "*Cancer of the Middle Ear*," by Dr. V. M. Dalley; "*Preliminary Results in the Treatment of Patients with Advanced Carcinoma of the Bladder by 2 MeV Rotation Therapy*," by Dr. J. E. Stapleton; "*The Use of Radioactive Colloidal Gold in the Palliative Treatment of Patients with Pleural Effusions and Ascites Due to Malignant Disease*," by Dr. R. J. Walton.
- INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY, Lisle Street, Leicester Square, London, W.C.—November 16, 5.30 p.m., "*Pigmentary Disturbances*," clinical demonstration by Dr. I. Muende.
- POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON, Hammersmith Hospital, Duane Road, W.—November 16, 11.15 a.m., Surgical Clinical-Pathological Conference; 2 p.m., "*Stab Wounds of the Heart*," by Mr. A. T. Andreasen.
- ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.—November 16, 5 p.m., "*Oral Syphilis*," Webb-Johnson Lecture by Professor R. V. Bradlaw.
- ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY, 7, Melbourn Place, Edinburgh.—November 16, 8 p.m., "*Idiopathic Ulcerative Colitis*," by Mr. J. D. Cormack.
- ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE.—At Darlington Town Hall, November 16, 10 a.m., "*Brucellosis: A Disease of Man and Animals*," by Dr. D. J. H. Payne.
- SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY: FINE CHEMICALS GROUP.—At Middlesex Hospital Medical School, Mortimer Street, London, W., November 16, 7 p.m., "*Blood Anticoagulants, with Special Reference to Dextran Sulphate*," by Mr. C. R. Ricketts, Ph.D., and Dr. K. W. Walton.

APPOINTMENTS

- AUSTIN, THOMAS A., C.M.G., L.R.C.P.&S.I., D.P.H., D.T.M.&H., Public Health Officer, Regional Office for Africa, World Health Organization.
- GILLET, JOS. A., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health and Chief School Medical Officer, County Borough of Rotherham.
- HARDING, W. G., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H., Deputy Medical Officer of Health, Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, and Assistant Divisional Medical Officer, Public Health Department, London County Council.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS

BIRTHS

- Divers.—On October 26, 1951, at the Redhill County Hospital, Surrey, to Betty (formerly Craig), wife of Dr. Lloyd Divers, a daughter.
- Drummond.—On October 1, 1951, to Margaret, wife of James W. Drummond, M.B., Ch.B., Hatfield, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, a son.
- Franklin.—On October 27, 1951, at the North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary, to Margaret (formerly McIlroy), wife of Dr. C. B. Franklin, a son.
- Prestt.—On October 18, 1951, to June (formerly Coops), wife of Dr. John Prestt, of West Ridge Lodge, Oxton, Cheshire, a son—Jonathan.
- Wolff.—On October 23, 1951, to Catherine Bernadette, wife of Dr. Frederick Wolff, a daughter.

MARRIAGES

- Nash—Phillips.—On October 13, 1951, at Sidcup, Kent, Peter Howard Nash, M.D., of London, to Ada Elizabeth Phillips, of Adelaide, South Australia.
- Old—Say.—On October 10, 1951, at Combe Down, Bath, Dr. Rowton Old to Pamela Say.

DEATHS

- Bidie.—On October 30, 1951, at Edinburgh, George Bidie, M.D., F.R.C.S.Ed., Lieutenant-Colonel, I.M.S., retired.
- Hadfield.—On October 27, 1951, at "Overhayes," Marazion, Cornwall, Rowland Hurst Hadfield, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., aged 71.
- Lowe.—On September 2, 1951, at his home, 50, Merton Road, Harrow, Middlesex, Peter Lowe, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., formerly of Hereford, aged 77.
- MacKenna.—On November 1, 1951, at Mellish Hotel, Mellish Road, Walsall, Staffs, David Lockhart MacKenna, M.B., Ch.B.
- Moore.—On October 28, 1951, at 24, Minster Yard, Lincoln, Jane Kerry McElroy Moore, J.P., M.B., Ch.B.
- Prentice.—On October 29, 1951, at 63, Cambridge Road, Southport, Alexander Prentice, M.B., Ch.B., C.M.
- Robson.—On November 2, 1951, at King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor, William Gordon Robson, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P., of Green Alley, Farnham Common, Bucks.
- Scott.—On October 30, 1951, at Boleyn, Blandford, Dorset, Leonard Bodley Scott, M.D., D.P.H., Lieutenant-Colonel, I.M.S., retired.
- Steen.—On October 29, 1951, at "Dunboe," Shepperton-on-Thames, Middlesex, Hugh Barkley Steen, M.D., M.Ch., Lieutenant-Colonel, I.M.S., retired.
- Thomas.—On October 30, 1951, at 49, Victoria Road North, Southsea, Hants, Arthur Richard Thomas, O.B.E., F.R.C.S.Ed., Surgeon Rear-Admiral, R.N., retired, aged 75.

Any Questions?

Correspondents should give their names and addresses (not for publication) and include all relevant details in their questions, which should be typed. We publish here a selection of those questions and answers which seem to be of general interest.

Early Ambulation

Q.—How early should patients be got on their feet after abdominal operations such as appendectomy or cholecystectomy? What is gained by early ambulation, and what are the risks? Do follow-up studies support the claims made for early ambulation?

A.—It is the current practice of most abdominal surgeons to get their patients out of bed fairly soon after operation. Not unnaturally, there are considerable individual variations in this practice, but there is a general tendency to get patients up and about within two to four days of an abdominal operation. Some have suggested that it is important to have the patient walking within 24 hours, but most surgeons prefer a more considerate regime.

There is no doubt at all that most patients benefit greatly both in their morale and in their sense of physical well-being. Other advantages are: first, that urinals and bedpans are used to the very minimum, to the mutual advantage of nurses and patients; secondly, that there is a diminished incidence of post-operative pulmonary collapse (although it is stressed that early ambulation is merely one aspect of the modern "shake-up" regime); and, thirdly, there is probably a lower incidence of venous thrombosis. There seem to be no real risks associated with the intelligent practice of early ambulation. Anxiety about integrity of the suture line has proved unfounded. Some believe that wounds heal better, and there is experimental support for this view; at all events there is certainly neither a higher incidence of wound disruption nor a greater number of recurrences following hernia operations. Early rising should not, however, be used as a pretext for too early discharge from hospital care.

Follow-up studies do support the reasonable claims for early ambulation; they do not support extravagant claims that, for example, post-operative venous thrombosis is reduced tenfold in its incidence.

All these points are fully discussed with a good bibliography in the *British Medical Journal* (1948, 2, 1026), and the questioner is referred to this leading article for a compact summary of the recent literature on this subject.

Excision of Patella after Fracture

Q.—What are the indications for excising the patella after fracture? What is the prognosis? What exercises are suggested for rehabilitation after the operation?

A.—Excision of the patella is advisable for comminuted fractures with displacement at all ages, and for transverse fractures with displacement in patients over the age of 45 years. The prognosis is good provided the operation is performed skilfully and is followed by an adequate period of intensive physiotherapy. The only common residual disability in such cases is slight impairment of power of extension of the knee, noticed when climbing stairs or ladders, and perhaps slight limitation of the range of flexion.

Exercises should be begun one week after operation. At first they should consist simply of active quadriceps contractions. After about three weeks, when the tendon repair is becoming sound, straight-leg-raising exercises and more intensive static quadriceps contractions are practised. As strength improves, resistance exercises are added. The object should be to secure a powerful quadriceps muscle, able to sustain the knee in full extension when raised from the bed, before flexion exercises are begun. In a favour-