

treatment of skin diseases with penicillin and streptomycin are fully discussed. Much attention is given to hormonal and vitamin treatment. Many useful prescriptions for topical treatment are to be found at the end of the chapter.

The chapter on venereology includes excellent pictures of the skin manifestations of syphilis. Syphilis, gonorrhoea, soft sore, lymphogranuloma venereum, and granuloma venereum are thoroughly discussed. Mercury, arsenic, bismuth, and iodine, their administration and toxic manifestations occupy a large part of the chapter. Towards penicillin the author adopts a rather cautious attitude and relies more on arsenic in the treatment of syphilis. Penicillin in his opinion should be used only in cases of toxic manifestations and resistance to arsenic. There is an important chapter on gonorrhoea dealing with that disease in the male, female, and child. Rectal gonorrhoea, blennorrhoea, and mucosa oris are dealt with separately. Clinical features, bacteriology, and serology are well described. In the author's opinion the gonococcal complement fixation for gonorrhoea lags far behind the Wassermann reaction in importance. Local treatment is given a fairly wide discussion, and penicillin, if available, is the method of choice. Non-specific urethritis, soft-sore, lymphogranuloma venereum, and granuloma venereum are described, and their treatment discussed. The section ends with a discussion of prophylaxis and the fight against venereal disease. This book can be recommended to all students of dermatology and venereology who wish to know the continental teaching on these subjects.

H.H.

**Syphilis: Its Course and Management.** By Evan W. Thomas, M.D. 1949. New York and London: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 317, 68 Figs. 42s.

Dr. Evan Thomas is an outstanding personality amongst American syphilologists and his work and writings have been particularly identified with the rapid treatment of syphilis. After experience of the "continuous-alternating" use of arsenamines and bismuth, partly at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, he became Director of the Rapid Treatment Centre, Bellevue Hospital, New York. There, during the past decade, he has had unusual experience in the rapid treatment of early syphilis, first with mapharsen and fever, and since 1943 with various preparations of penicillin. In neurosyphilis studies he has had Bernhard Dattner and Carl Lange as colleagues, and has enjoyed equally expert assistance in the other specialized aspects of syphilology, including serological work. His insistence on history-taking and clinical thoroughness, and his personal approach to and handling of his patients and their problems are all well-known. Furthermore, the system of case records in his Bellevue Centre is outstanding. Such opportunities and facilities have provided the material for his present monograph.

Syphilotherapy is now in a stage of transition, with an undeniable trend towards the exclusive use of penicillin. This trend, which arose and is most advanced in the United States, is reflected in Dr. Thomas's book. The course of untreated syphilis, immunology, and the

value and interpretation of quantitative serologic tests all receive special emphasis, these sections alone occupying one third of the text. The various penicillin preparations available and the general principles underlying their use in syphilis are described in about forty pages. In contrast, iodides, bismuth, arsenicals, and fever therapy are dismissed in eight pages. There is an excellent chapter on the history, examination, and education of the patient, including reference to contacts and their abortive treatment before evidence of early syphilis appears. Subsequent chapters discuss the various stages of acquired syphilis, congenital infection and syphilis associated with pregnancy. The final chapter, contributed by Dr. Theodore J. Bauer, Chief of the Venereal Disease Division of the United States Public Health Service, outlines the public health aspects in the United States. Each chapter has a short list of references to important publications, and there is a full and accurate index. There are 68 figures, the majority presenting serological records of illustrative cases, and the format is worthy of the publishers.

The text is written in an engaging style, but the limitations of space have made some sections unduly dogmatic, and others too superficial. For the expert and those others already knowledgeable in the subject it makes easy and pleasant reading; it is refreshing to find an author who draws very largely on his own personal experience without constant reference to other authorities. For the undergraduate, at least in Britain, it would seem scarcely adequate as a presentation of clinical syphilis, and in this regard the absence of clinical illustrations, other than a few radiographs, is noticeable. Some statements are open to debate:

e.g. "most cases of uncomplicated aortitis cannot be suspected without the aid of a teleroentgenogram or fluoroscopic examination" (p. 217). "Herxheimer reactions were encountered even more frequently (with penicillin) than with arsenical drugs" (p. 112). "In former years, because of frequent gastrointestinal reactions following arsenical drugs, patients with cardiovascular syphilis were treated largely with bismuth" (p. 232). "In most cases the disease (interstitial keratitis) seems to run its course in from 12 to 18 months, regardless of the type of antisyphilitic treatment given" (p. 193).

There are a few minor errors:

e.g. "To detect relapse, serological tests for syphilis must be made at no less [surely *more* or *longer* is meant?] than monthly intervals throughout pregnancy" (p. 266 and 271).

It is surprising that there is no mention of syringe-transmitted infection in the paragraph on arsenical hepatitis (p. 102).

American experience with penicillin in syphilis is unequalled, and Dr. Thomas is an impressive advocate. In warmly recommending his new monograph to all those with a specialist interest in the antibiotic treatment of syphilis, we hope with Dr. John F. Mahoney, who contributes the foreword, "that upon the present volume Dr. Thomas will build a series of revisions which will carry the disease through the period of change and which will attempt a final evaluation of the events now taking place."

S. M. L.