

BOOK REVIEWS

La Blennorrhagie. By Pierre Durel. 1949. Paris: Masson et Cie. 2,200 fr. 649 pages.

This book, written in French, deals very thoroughly with every aspect of gonorrhoea, in both male and female. It is extremely well written and is divided into four sections, that on laboratory examinations being very up-to-date and including the latest modern research. For the first time, I believe, in any textbook there is a photomicrograph of the gonococcus as seen through the electronic microscope.

The second section, which deals with the clinical aspects of the infection, includes some interesting theories regarding infection of the cervix uteri and the production of cervical erosions. In the section dealing with treatment, the descriptions of operative technique, especially the various methods of electrocoagulation, are most detailed. There has been much painstaking work devoted to this part of the book. The final section deals with the modern sociological and legal aspects of the disease.

The text is amply illustrated by some 279 drawings and photographs. This book is well worth a place in the library of all venereologists.

W. N. M.

Atlas der Haut- und Geschlechtskrankheiten. By Walther Freiboer and Walther Schoenfeld. 1949. Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart. D.M. 66

This atlas of skin and venereal diseases contains 428 illustrations, of which 343 are representations of the commoner skin diseases and the remainder are devoted to venereal diseases, principally syphilis. Most of the illustrations are taken from colour photographs, and there are a few black-and-white prints. The pictures, on the whole, are faithful copies, but here and there, one finds that the colours printed in the atlas give the skin a somewhat unnatural hue, with yellow tints unduly prominent in a substantial minority of the reproductions. Nevertheless, many of the prints are remarkably life-like and a few are outstandingly so, e.g., Fig. 211 illustrating subacute lupus erythematosus.

The choice of skin photographs has been good, and illustrations of the very rare dermatoses or bizarre varieties of the common skin diseases have wisely been avoided. In view, however, of the increasing rarity in present day British practice of the later manifestations of syphilis, thanks to penicillin and other anti-luetic drugs, the atlas would be improved if more space had been given to syphilis. Some of the reproductions devoted to syphilis are poor, in particular those illus-

trating the roseolar syphilide and the maculo-papular rash in early syphilis. Both these figures would be of greater value if they were on a larger scale and showed the general distribution and character of the rash.

The text, which is in German, gives a brief clinical description of the conditions illustrated and there is a very brief discussion of treatment. A novel feature is the large number of dermatographs or "finger-prints" of the common (and several rare) dermatoses. These apart from the inevitable palm-print of Darier's disease, are not made use of in Great Britain as much as they might be.

One hesitates to say for whom the atlas is designed. The fully-fledged dermatologist will be familiar with all the skin diseases represented therein, and ought to be familiar with many more clinical varieties of the venereal diseases than the atlas presents to him. The venereologist, too, will find it inadequate. The budding venereologist or dermatologist should learn from the patient and *never* from an atlas, and the same is true of the undergraduate. There remains only the general practitioner, and the reviewer thinks that it is the doctor in a busy practice who may derive the most help from this publication—even if his German is rusty—in the absence of an up-to-date English equivalent. E. J. M.

Lehrbuch der Haut- und Geschlechtskrankheiten. By Walther Schoenfeld. 1949. Fifth edition. Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart. 179 black-and-white and 16 coloured illustrations. D.M. 24.

That this textbook of Dermatology and Venereology is already in its fifth edition indicates its popularity in Germany. It is a well-written book, and should be readily followed by the student of dermatology and venereology. The print and paper are of good quality, and so are the black and white pictures, which illustrate to the reader the majority of common and uncommon conditions. These illustrations contribute greatly to the value of the book, because good pictures are sometimes better than the best descriptions of a skin or a venereal condition. The general section of the book deals with anatomy, physiology, and the pathology of the skin. This is followed by a description of a routine examination of a skin case. The special section is divided into two parts, one dealing with dermatology, the other with venereology. The dermatological section deals exhaustively with all common and uncommon dermatoses, and the student can find much useful information. A valuable chapter on treatment reflects the traditional school of German dermatology, and new ways of

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.