

BOOK REVIEWS

An Atlas of the Commoner Skin Diseases. By Henry C. G. Semon and the late Arnold Moritz, who directed the photography. 1953. Pp. 379, 147 col. plates. Wright, Bristol. 75s.

The importance of visual aids in medical teaching is now firmly established, and their value is nowhere greater than in dermatology. However, black-and-white illustrations of skin lesions are totally inadequate substitutes for the clinical demonstration of characteristic patients, and it is usually impracticable to assemble enough typical cases in one place at one teaching session. In these circumstances, expert colour photography from life provides a convenient and effective visual aid, and it is impossible to imagine a better dermatological picture gallery than the fourth edition of this well-known Atlas. This recent edition is larger than its predecessors and includes some entirely new plates, while the "thumb-nail" accounts of the conditions illustrated distill much valuable advice on diagnosis and treatment. This Atlas is not intended as a text-book; its supreme value lies in the provision of a coloured and life-like key to the recognition of skin conditions. As such it will be of special assistance to the undergraduate and particularly to the general practitioner, but no one seeing it will fail to appreciate it as an epic of medical illustration.

S. M. L.

Dermatologische Bilder und Merksaetze (Dermatological Pictures and Axioms). By Prof. W. Krantz. 1953. Pp. 118, 112 half-tones, and 22 col. illus. Barth, Leipzig.

The author, who has held the Chair of Dermatology at the University of Göttingen, has had a life-long experience in the teaching of this subject. This volume is intended for students and should be regarded only as an aid in learning to diagnose the common skin diseases.

Emphasis is laid on the illustrations, the principal features being pointed out by means of captions.

One short chapter deals with the essentials of the diagnosis of skin diseases and another gives a general outline of the therapy. The remainder of the text is written in synopsis form and deals with the diagnosis and differential diagnosis of the more important skin diseases: eczema, parasitic infections, psoriasis, neoplasms, etc. Interspersed are axioms printed in italics

which aim to help the student (the general practitioner of the future) to avoid serious mistakes and pitfalls in making a diagnosis and in deciding on treatment.

Syphilis and *ulcus molle* represent the venereal diseases; eighteen half-tones, two coloured photographs, and one diagram illustrate the various stages of acquired and congenital syphilis. A Table shows the points of difference between *ulcus molle* and primary sore. The student is instructed "to examine the syphilitic patient from head to foot". In the axioms he is warned that the report of the serologist is valueless without an interpretation from the clinician, that treatment should never be given without the diagnosis being firmly established, and that every pregnant woman with a history of syphilis should be treated in the second half of her pregnancy irrespective of the result of the blood test.

A list of skin diseases which, like syphilis, may affect the skin and mucous membranes simultaneously (tuberculosis, pemphigus, lupus erythematoses, erythema exudativum multiforme, etc.) is very useful.

The black-and-white photographs are all of a very high standard, but the coloured plates are (as so often) less satisfactory, the outlines being blurred and the colours appearing somewhat unnatural.

This book is undoubtedly a very useful aid to the student, but the author rightly stresses the fact that pictures can never replace clinical demonstrations in the teaching of skin diseases.

A. F.

Press Guide to British Chemicals and their Manufacturers. 1953. Pp. 76. Association of British Chemical Manufacturers, London.

This booklet has been prepared by the A.B.C.M. to provide a handy means of reference to sources of information on chemical subjects. It contains a directory of the companies which are members of the association, an index of chemical products and fields of research likely to be the subject of inquiry, and a comprehensive list of proprietary and trade names. It is proposed to issue revised editions from time to time. Research workers or others who would find this directory useful should write for a free copy to The Manager, A.B.C.M., 166, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

S. M. L.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITOR,

The British Journal of Venereal Diseases.

Sir,

I should like to correct an error in my paper "Gonococcal Infection of the Para-Urethral Glands in the Female" (September, 1952). In it I stated that cultural methods of diagnosis were not a routine measure at the Hôpital Saint-Lazare, Paris. Although this statement was written in 1950, it

was even then out of date as this measure was instituted at the Hôpital Saint-Lazare in April, 1948.

Dr. Durel has already received my personal apologies but I should like, in addition, to record them here.

I am, etc.,

ELISABETH REES

March 13, 1953.
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