

News, Notes and Queries

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The titles of the communications which it is intended to present (10 minutes allowed for each) should be sent to Professor Turchini without delay, together with a short abstract.

To facilitate publication of the Proceedings of the Congress, members are asked to send copies of the full text of their communications (6 typewritten pages—maximum 10 pages) to Professor F. A. Sondervorst, 124, avenue des Alliés, Louvain, Belgium, at the earliest possible moment.

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The Secretary-General of the Congress is Dr. Louis Dulieu, 22, rue Durand, Montpellier, France.

Book Reviews

The Story of Heart Disease. TERENCE EAST, M.A., D.M. (Oxon), F.R.C.P. London: William Dawson & Sons Ltd., 1958; pp. 148. Illustrated. 30s.

In these FitzPatrick Lectures, Dr. East gives a fascinating account of some of the milestones in the history of cardiology. As he points out in the Preface, to consider this topic only from the aspect of time and to give a succession of dates and names carries a risk of a dull narrative. For this reason he has devoted each of the four lectures to a selected topic, namely: Diagnosis; 'Lessons of the Deadhouse'; The Coronary Circulation; and Failure of the Circulation and its Treatment. The result is a most readable book on the growth of our knowledge in cardiology. Overlapping, a risk inherent in the division of the subject into these four lectures, which is also mentioned in the Preface, has been reduced to a negligible minimum. Dr. East carries his great knowledge and wide reading lightly, and the reader is treated to a learned and instructive story, which at no time becomes dull and contains many a passage of humour and wit. There are also some stories re-told which show the great clinical acumen of our forefathers. It is curious that one of these, the diagnosis, from pulse changes, of love-sickness and of the lady of the patient's affections, which East tells of Erasistratus, has also been ascribed in almost the same form to Avicenna.

Errors in the spelling of names are unfortunate in a book of this kind: Poisenille instead of Poiseuille, Küssmaul instead of Kussmaul, Bäumlér instead of Bäumlér; also 1939 instead of 1839 (p. 134), palpitation instead of palpation (p. 132), and others. In the fascinating account of the long-delayed recognition of coronary thrombosis, Herrick's paper of 1919 is not mentioned; it has always been surprising to the reviewer that this classical paper, with an almost prophetic forecast of the value of electrocardiography in the diagnosis and location of myocardial infarction, did not attract more attention. The great importance of Lower is rightly emphasized, and his own description of the tubercle, which bears his name, is given in translation. A brief mention would have been welcome of the violent attack of Lancisi, who

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wrongly accused Lower of having appropriated Eustachius's discovery of the Eustachian valve and having turned it into his intervenous tubercle. Borelli's statement, implying an automatic myogenic origin of the heart beat, is quoted; essentially the same view can be found in Leonardo da Vinci to whom no reference is made. Much space is rightly given to the study of the pulse; here a curious omission is the name of Otto Frank (1865–1948). As the author points out, 'Adams-Stokes' attacks would be more accurate than 'Stokes-Adams', and it is interesting to note that, on the continent of Europe, the former designation is often used. The statement on p. 28 that Thomas Lewis studied alternation electrically seems to the reviewer to carry a risk for the uninitiated that the difference between mechanical and electrical alternans may be obscured. The place of contemporaries in the historical course of development of our knowledge is notoriously difficult to assess, and the singling out of certain authors is a somewhat precarious undertaking. Regarding arrhythmias, Prinzmetal's book is almost the only contemporary work mentioned, though in a rather guarded way; in the bibliography the book appears as if written only by him, whereas there are four additional and a further eight associate authors (even the insipid *et al.* would have been welcome). As East himself points out, the real nature of the arrhythmias discussed in that particular section still eludes us; if it appeared desirable to mention Prinzmetal, other contemporary workers, who have at least contributed as much to our knowledge, could with advantage have received a brief mention. The reviewer would also be reluctant to accept without qualification the statement that, to diagnose arrhythmias, 'Now we hardly need more than our ears and fingers.' Why should about half a dozen extensive books have appeared on this subject within the last six years if this were so?

However, these are but small points in an admirable presentation of a fascinating subject. One of Dr. East's predecessors as FitzPatrick Lecturer, Maurice Davidson, made, in the Epilogue to his lectures on Medicine in Oxford, an eloquent appeal to build a bridge between the humanities and science:

In this utilitarian age, with all its worship of the earthly and its apotheosis of the ephemeral, where better could we seek them [the materials for the completion of this bridge] than in the historical background, in the ancient spirit and atmosphere, and in all the nobility and grace and beauty of that great Academy of learning, whose motto for four hundred years has been *Dominus Illuminatio Mea*.

Dr. East, also an Oxonian, has, in these lectures, contributed to that desirable bridge a stone at once useful and ornamental.

A. SCHOTT

Selected Writings of Walter E. Dandy. Compiled by CHARLES E. TROLAND, M.D., and FRANK J. OTENASEK, M.D. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1957; pp. vii, 789. Illustrated. £5 12s. 6d.

This superb volume, so exquisitely, so artistically produced, forms an imposing and fitting memorial to one of the great pioneers in the surgery of the central nervous system. It does not embrace all that Dandy wrote—indeed, it would be impossible to do so in one volume—but the authors have gathered together seventy-eight of his most important articles. The first was written at the age of twenty-five, a year after qualification, when, under the influence of Harvey Cushing, he studied and described the blood supply of the pituitary gland. The last, on the location of consciousness in