REVIEWS.

*The Growth of Bone.* By William Macewen, F.R.S. Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons. 1912.

Sir William Macewen has in this little volume given us the results of an experimental inquiry into the development and reproduction of diaphyseal bone.

The author considered the inquiry necessary "as a firm belief exists that all periosteum produces bone," and in the experiments which he carried out he has demonstrated that the periosteum plays no part in osteogenesis, and that this process depends entirely on the living osteoblast.

Some of the experiments related in the volume have already been published; the remainder appear now for the first time.

The opening chapter deals with the genesis of the osteoblast, after which the author goes on to expound his views as to the function of the peristeme, the production of bone in acute osteomyelitis, and the essential difference between epiphyseal and diaphyseal bone. The succeeding chapters are devoted to descriptions of the experiments, their results, and the author's comments on the same, and in the concluding chapter the findings, based on the experiments, are summarised.

It would serve no useful purpose here to give an account of the different problems which the author has set himself to solve. We have given above the conclusion to which all the experiments point, viz., the dependence of osteogenesis on the osteoblast, and we would advise our readers to possess themselves of the volume, and to study it from beginning to end. It is a good piece of work thoroughly carried out, and of it the author has reason to be proud.

In general style the volume is a credit to the publishers, and maintains the best traditions of the University Press.
Recent Methods in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Syphilis: The Wassermann Serum Reaction and Ehrlich’s Salvarsan. By Carl H. Browning, M.D., and Ivy Mackenzie, M.A., B.Sc., M.B., Ch.B., in collaboration with John Cruickshank, M.B., Ch.B., and Charles G. A. Chislett, M.B., Ch.B., Walter Gilmour, M.B., Ch.B., Hugh Morton, M.B., Ch.B. With an Introduction by Robert Muir, M.A., M.D., F.R.S. London: Constable & Co., Limited. 1911.

This remarkable volume contains a vast amount of information, the result of skilled and painstaking research in laboratory, library, and clinique. It is no mere compilation, but a keenly critical inquiry into everything that pertains to the Wassermann reaction and to salvarsan. The contributions by the writers of this book towards improving the technique of the Wassermann reaction are too numerous to mention; but we cannot refrain from drawing attention to the introduction by them of a lecithin-cholesterol solution to replace the old unsatisfactory antigens; and of equal importance, perhaps, is their demonstration of the variability of complement-content in guinea-pig serum, and the fallacies to which inattention to this may give rise. The Wassermann test for syphilis, if it has become much more complicated in the hands of these workers, has also been converted into an efficient and dependable tool. Everything has been sacrificed to thoroughness. These authors are no friends to so-called “simplified” methods, and hold out no prospect—as some in their ignorance may have fondly hoped—that the impanelled doctor will be able to carry out this reaction at the bedside with a tabloid and test-tube.

If the practical physician and surgeon have been casual in their perusal of the first odd hundred pages, which are devoted to technical matters, and make their appeal specially to laboratory workers, albeit most lucid and readable, we feel sure that their interest will be caught up from the moment they commence the chapter headed “The Clinical Application of the Syphilis Reaction,” and will be kept prisoner till the close of the book. The mutability of medicine is strongly emphasised, as we see what marvellous changes have come over our conception of syphilis even within the last few years, and many a man will feel as strange amidst all these new ideas as Rip Van Winkle did on returning to his native village after his long sleep. It is disappointing to be told that Colles’ Law does not exist, and that women to whom we
thought it applied are in reality “latent syphilitics,” living in a fool’s paradise, where the spirochæte but sleeps. It is also exasperating to learn that, in all probability, in most of our vaunted cures in pre-Ehrlich days, the spirochætes were merely scotched, and that we have been sanctioning marriages that ought never to have taken place. A crumb of comfort is, however, offered in the fact that, in some cases, mercury has caused a positive Wassermann reaction to become negative. In view of the veritable miracles we have ourselves performed in the past with potassium iodide in tertiary cases, we cannot but regret that the writers make no mention of the action of this invaluable drug on the test for syphilis. Many who have been laying the flatteringunction to their souls that the tertiary gumma was in the nature of a damnnum fatale will be made not a little uneasy by the assurance that it is preventible, and, unless quite oblivious to the snares of the phrase maker, these same “greasers” will, no doubt, now propound to themselves that popular, albeit humiliating conundrum of the late King Edward—“If preventible, why not prevented?” It also comes as quite a shock to learn that the tertiary lesion is infective, and that it harbours the contagium vivum; and we experience a feeling akin to despair as we read how these spirochætes when stranded in comparatively bloodless structures, such as the sheaths of nerves, are well-nigh inaccessible to even the most potent of remedies. After having grown accustomed to regard tabes and general paralysis as “parasyphilitic” affections, it is hard to grasp that they are as much the work of the virile, indeed all but immortal, spirochæte as any other avowed syphilitic manifestation, and it is still more difficult to believe in not only their amelioration but their cure by salvarsan. A new vista is opened up by the demonstration of what a large part syphilis plays in the causation of congenital mental deficiency, and indeed of many other diseases whose dependence on the spirochæte pallida was, till lately, not even suspected. It is, however, somewhat reassuring to find that no series of cases has, so far, been brought forward to prove that in many “most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,” it is not the gout that galls but the pox which pinches. Still one never knows what a day may bring forth, and it shall not surprise us to learn that Falstaff’s second curse, “a gout of this pox,” like a second thought, is best for quite a number of irascible old gentlemen. In view of the absolute dependence of all congenital lesions on living spirochætes, the refractoriness of many of these to
treatment, and the persistence of a positive Wassermann reaction into adult life, it seems strange that we should still be calling in question the veracity of Moses' statement—"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers" (i.e., the worship of Baal-Peor) "upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation!"

The evidence here adduced proves conclusively that in salvarsan we have a remedy far superior to mercury. It has been successful in cases where the older drug has failed; moreover, it acts with a promptitude that mercury at its very best cannot approach, and this celerity of cure is of incalculable benefit to the patient. It is candidly admitted that at present it is impossible to say anything about permanency of cure; time alone will settle this. The writers recommend that, in addition to injection of salvarsan, courses of mercurial inunction should be given, and they bring forward convincing theoretical reasons for so doing; but we do not remember that in any of their own cases was this procedure adopted. It must be some hundreds of years since excision of the chancre was first advocated, and it is impossible to say how often this practice has been resuscitated and relinquished. Not so very long ago we thought it had been buried for good, but here it is again. There is evidently no killing of it, and its claims to live seem unanswerable; "thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges." All the same we have not been able to discover from the cases reported that the present resurrectionists have, as yet, had the courage of their convictions.

If much is made of the marvellous cures brought about by salvarsan, equal prominence, it must be confessed, is given to the disasters and deaths attributed to it. Nothing is buried; the evidence for and against is judicially examined, and we are confident that all right-minded people will heartily approve of the verdict of not guilty; and will accept, without reservation, the writers' dictum that there is no more danger in an intravenous injection of salvarsan than in a dose of antipyrin, provided "due attention be paid to the contra-indications already clearly laid down, and to the instructions as to the method of use." It seems to us, however, a most remarkable fact that, omitting the untoward results encountered by the present writers, all the accidents without exception, and all the fatalities apart from one in Italy, should have been reported from Germany. In view of the statement that many of the cases, owing to the malignancy of the disease, were quite unsuitable for treatment, it would almost appear
as though the German illness was a much more formidable malady than the morbus gallicus, the Spanish sickness, the Neapolitan disease, or what one of Ben Jonson's characters calls the English pox!

We have tried to indicate the sort of fare that is here provided in order to induce our readers to partake of the feast. This is a worthy addition to the notable books by Glasgow men, and is specially welcome as showing that we have in our midst a most virile school of pathologists.

Professor Muir contributes an interesting introduction, wherein he discusses some aspects of the Wassermann reaction, and draws attention to the more outstanding features of the work under review.

The Johns Hopkins Hospital Reports. Vol. XVI. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1911.

This volume of Reports contains five articles, the lengthiness of which may be surmised from the fact that the volume runs to nearly 700 pages.

The first article is on the experimental production of tuberculosis in the genito-urinary organs, and is contributed by Dr. George Walker, Associate in Surgery in the Johns Hopkins University. The object of Dr. Walker's research was to study the different modes by which the genito-urinary organs of the male can be infected, and to observe the spread of the disease from one organ to another along the tract. A limited study of the disease in the female was also made. From a summary of the author's conclusions he makes the following points of surgical significance:—Tuberculous processes in the genito-urinary organs have two initial points—the glomeruli of the kidneys and the tubules of the epididymis. For practical surgical consideration these are the only sites. Primary tuberculosis of the bladder never occurs, and primary tuberculosis of the prostate or vesicles is so rare that it may be discarded. Extension from the kidney to the bladder is common. The opposite may occur; but it does so very rarely, and only when there is a special involvement around the orifice of the ureter. Tuberculosis may descend from the vesicles and prostate to the epididymis, but ascension from the epididymis to these organs is much more common, and is practically the only condition of surgical importance.

The same author contributes also a paper to the effect on
breeding of the removal of prostate, or of vesiculæ seminales, or of both, together with observations on the conditions of the testes after such operations on white rats. He finds that a rat may beget offspring when the prostate has been completely removed. Excision of the vesiculæ would seem to interfere with virility, and excision of vesiculæ and prostate renders the male sterile. These measures have no effect on the structure or function of the testes.

The next article is on scalping accidents, by Dr. John Staige Davis, and is based upon a critical review of the literature, upon the author’s experimental work, and upon two cases of complete scalping which are healed by skin-transplantation. The author believes that when replacement is not possible the best results will be obtained by whole-thickness grafts, and he gives an account of the technique and the appropriate after-treatment.

Dr. J. Hall Pleasants writes on obstruction of the inferior vena cava, and gives a summary of the literature, classified according to the cause of obstruction. Dr. P. D. Cameron communicates physiological and pharmacological studies on cardiac tonicity in mammals.

The appearance of the volume is in our eyes spoilt by the different kinds of paper used by the printer, glazed sheets being here and there interpolated where illustrations in the text occur. The articles give evidence of great industry, especially in the matter of bibliography, and they will be welcomed by other workers in the same fields of research.

New and Non-Official Remedies, 1911. Chicago: Press of the American Medical Association. 1911.

This book contains the medicinal substances which, prior to 1st January, 1911, have been examined by the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association, which appeared to comply with the rules of the Council, and which, therefore, were accepted for inclusion. Acceptance of an article does not necessarily imply a recommendation of it, but merely that, so far as known, it complies with the rules. The rules are drawn up so as to ensure that the proprietary articles accepted have their composition set forth, their identity capable of being tested for, and, in general, that they are not fraudulent in composition or claims, and are not advertised directly to the public.
It is a pity that such a book is not published by some authority in Britain; but as the drugs in it are common, as a rule, both to America and Britain, it is well worth while for British medical men meantime to acquire a copy of this book, for it furnishes, in an assembled mass of information, what is not otherwise available about the composition, mode of preparation, &c., of most reputable proprietary drugs.

Reports from the Laboratory of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Vols. X and XI. Edited by Sir John Batty Tuke, M.D., and James Ritchie, M.D. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd. 1911.

Volume X contains 27 papers published between 1905 and April, 1907, and Vol. XI 41 papers published from then to the end of 1910. The papers are grouped under the headings of anatomy, pathology, pharmacology, and physiology, and range over a very wide field in these branches. They have been published in many different journals, and these volumes consist of reprints of the papers bound together in book form. Collectively they form a most striking mass of original work, and they are a mine of information for all members of the profession who take an interest in keeping themselves fresh and up to date. Where all the papers are of so high a level, it would be invidious to compare the individual contributions. The Royal College of Physicians is to be congratulated on the amount and excellence of the work done in its laboratory.

Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery. By Frederick Strange Kolle, M.D. London and New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1911.

This is a monograph confined mainly to the treatment of defects and deformities of the face and ears. Most of the operations and the numerous details of surgical technique are those which are equally well given in any of the ordinary text-books of surgery. There are, however, a number of directions given for treating special deformities seen by the author, but the principles being once accepted any surgeon would, of course, treat each case of unusual deformity by an operation devised for its special requirements. On the
use of paraffin injections, or hydrocarbon protheses, as he prefers to call them, the author is decidedly helpful. His experience is this line is obviously large, and his teaching is distinctly sound. The relative merits of hard and soft paraffin are discussed, and he gives a résumé of some of the histological changes resulting from this treatment. To this part, especially, the book owes most of its value.

Physiology of the Central Nervous System and the Special Senses, for the use of Students. By N. J. Vazifdar, L.M. and S. Bombay: James & Sons. 1911.

We are quite willing to believe that this compilation has "been found very helpful by the students of the author's Physiology Classes, preparing for the intermediate M.B., and L.M. and S., examinations of the Bombay University"; but we cannot recommend it to Britons born and bred.

ABSTRACTS FROM CURRENT MEDICAL LITERATURE.

EDITED BY ROY F. YOUNG, M.B., B.C.

MEDICINE.

Pseudo-Muscular Hypertrophy. By M. G. Burris, B.A., M.D. (The Canadian Medical Association Journal, January, 1912).—The only point of interest in this article is the incidence of the disease in three successive generations. The ancestors of the patients came to Nova Scotia in 1760, and were of Scottish and Irish stock. No case is known to have occurred among them till 1820.

A marriage in 1815 resulted in twelve children, six boys and six girls. Three boys developed the disease and died; the others were free. These three boys married, but no case has appeared in their descendants to the second generation. Of the six girls all married; two have grandchildren, but no case has been observed. Each of the remaining four girls has given birth to one or more boys showing the disease (seven in all out of twenty-four children), while one of their girls has given birth to a boy now living and showing the disease.

In short, the disease as seen in three generations of this family has affected