of the lithographs, to do justice to this chapter of the work. We will merely remark that the principles which should guide a dispenser in interpreting a doubtful prescription are admirably laid down, and, if carefully studied in the manner Mr. Proctor suggests, will prove of essential service to the tyro.

We have read this volume with much pleasure and profit. It is one which should be in the hands of every pharmaceutical chemist, and the physician and general practitioner cannot fail to profit by its perusal. The fault of Mr. Proctor's book is diffuseness; but this is, perhaps, hardly to be avoided without losing the colloquial style of a lecture.

Swain's Surgical Emergencies.1—This Manual "is intended to supply what the author believes is a wide-spread want, viz: a small book containing directions for the immediate treatment of all those various emergencies with which the general practitioner may be called upon to deal at any moment." Such is the raison d'être which the author assigns for his work. So far as the main part of the book is concerned, namely, that which relates to surgery, it may well be doubted whether such a manual as this was in any way needed. There are several small text-books and works on minor surgery which cover this part of the field, and do it more fully and more thoroughly than our author. But the peculiar feature of this work is, that it includes not merely surgical emergencies, but those also which belong rather to medicine, e.g. emergencies arising in parturition and in cases of poisoning. Looking at its entire scope, we doubt whether there is any book which is designed to occupy the whole of this ground; and we may, therefore, believe that it will be useful, that it will help some of our professional brethren in sudden exigencies, and thus contribute to lessen human suffering and to prolong human life.

That the work will be well done we have sufficient guarantees at the outset. Mr. Swain is well known as an able and skilful medical practitioner, who has had large experience in operative surgery, and in those emergencies with which he here undertakes to deal. He has, moreover, called to his aid some able coadjutors; and additional value is given to his little book by the fact mentioned in the preface, namely, that Mr. George Lawson has revised the chapter upon "Injuries to the Eye," and Dr. Alfred Meadows that upon "Emergencies connected with Parturition."

In a work of this kind, when the author professes only to deal with a limited portion of a large subject, he is met by the difficulty

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1 Surgical Emergencies; together with the Emergencies attendant on Parturition, and the Treatment of Poisoning; a Manual for the use of General Practitioners. By William Paul Swain, F.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Royal Albert Hospital, Devonport. London, 1874.
of deciding what he is and what he is not to include, and he lays himself open to criticism both for faults of omission and of commission. For example, in this Manual, in speaking of Colles’s fracture of the radius, nothing is said about the ordinary methods of treatment by the pistol splint or by the straight splint, but a long account is given of “Gordon’s splint,” and this is the only one which is mentioned in connection with the subject. Now, Gordon’s splint, no doubt, is a very good one, but our subject is “Surgical Emergencies,” and in an emergency it is highly improbable that Gordon’s splint would be at hand. Fancy a general practitioner called five miles from home to see a case of urgent accident. He finds that it is a fracture of the lower end of the radius. He turns up the subject in Swain’s Manual, and the only method of treatment mentioned is by a rather complicated splint, which perhaps he has never heard of, and which he certainly has not got in his gig! We do not for a moment object to the value which is set upon Gordon’s splint, but surely other and simpler methods of treatment should at least be mentioned, if they are not explained in detail.

Again, the preface tells us that “the chapter on antiseptic treatment has been kindly written by Dr. Bishop at the request of Professor Lister, and embodies the most recent and exact directions for the effectual carrying out of this method.” This chapter we have studied with great interest. Mr. Lister’s method of dressing wounds is of so much importance to the practical surgeon, that we were glad to read an account of it which was brought up to the latest details, and, as it was given in a work upon surgical emergencies, we hoped that it might be presented in such a form as to adapt itself to the exigencies of general practice. But we were sadly mistaken. Unless there is some more rough-and-ready way of applying Mr. Lister’s principles, his method is certainly not at all suited to the requirements of general practitioners. Dr. Bishop’s account of it is very clear and lucid, but it leaves us with the conviction that it is far too complicated for use in surgical emergencies.

Take only one point in the system as it is here set forth. Mr. Lister, as we all know, attaches much importance in certain cases to the creation of an antiseptic atmosphere around the wound. How is this to be produced? Only one method is here mentioned, and it is the following: “This is provided in the form of a spray of 1 to 40 carbolic acid solution, for which the most easily managed and efficient instrument will probably be found to be a steam spray apparatus, manufactured for Mr. Lister by Mr. J. Gardner, 45, South Bridge, Edinburgh.” So, when a general practitioner is called to a case which he thinks would be best treated by the antiseptic method, he must send off to Edinburgh for a steam spray
**apparatus!** We believe Mr. Lister's method has been found impracticable in military surgery, on account of all the minute details which are essential to its success; and for the same reason we believe it will be found unsuited to surgical emergencies. If in such cases the surgeon wishes to employ antiseptic dressings, he must be contented to apply them in some much simpler way than that recommended in this Manual on the authority of the distinguished Edinburgh professor.

Again, surely any work which undertakes to assist general practitioners in emergencies, and which departs so far from the strict lines of surgery as to include emergencies arising from parturition or from poisoning, ought to contain some allusion to the immediate treatment of fits—apoplectic and epileptic fits—which are among the commonest emergencies that general practitioners are called to. On the other hand, it seems hardly necessary in a work of this kind to allude to rupture of the vas deferens, a very rare accident, and one which is not attended by any urgent symptoms. Indeed, so rare is this accident, that it is not even mentioned in the latest editions of Fergusson's, Erichsen's, or Pirrie's well-known works on surgery.

We mention these points, and we might mention others of the same kind, to show how difficult it is to deal with a restricted subject such as Mr. Swain has selected. If he goes over old ground he may well be asked to show cause why his book was published at all. If he omits the well-established dicta of the schools, and recommends only novel methods of treatment, he may place the practitioner who relies upon him for guidance in a very awkward position.

A book for emergencies should deal in a clear, brief, dogmatic way with what is most certainly known with regard to the cases in hand, and the methods of treatment recommended should be as simple as is consistent with efficiency. When an emergency arises it is not the time to try new contrivances or to discuss the merits of novel methods of treatment. We must say that, on the whole, our author has borne this in mind, and acted upon it so far as the narrow limits of his space permitted. Some subjects are remarkably well handled, *e.g.* retention of urine and strangulated hernia. In many instances, also, we have noticed that valuable practical hints are given which we do not remember to have seen elsewhere, and which no doubt the author has learnt by personal observation at the bedside.

On the whole, the perusal of this little book has left with us a high opinion of Mr. Swain's judgment and resources as a surgeon, though we are scarcely satisfied of the need there was for the work, or of the author's wisdom in entering upon it.