REVIEWS.

NEW BOOKS.

Developmental Pathology: A Study in Degenerative Evolution.
By Eugene S. Talbot, M.S., D.D.S. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. 1921. (25s. net.)

In the preface to this work the author informs us that his object is to show that the ontogeny of man is a modified recapitulation of his phylogeny in development. His second aim is to show that, "as the vertebral phase appears early in embryogeny, an unstable nervous system checked by parental defects, eruptive fevers, and other agencies at the periods of stress in the child, affects phylogeny and ontogeny." He believes that neither excessive nor arrested development is inherited directly from the parent. A child may be born exhibiting, both in structures and in organs, a departure from type. None of the defects may be found in the family for generations, and the solution of the difficulty is to be found in "intra-uterine education, environment, and development."

The actual text of the volume is preceded by an introduction, in which the reader will find general principles, afterwards amplified. It is by no means light reading for the beginner, but he comes back to it with a wider understanding, and therefore greater appreciation, after he has perused the contents of the chapters. It is very necessary for the student to have at the outset a clear idea of the terms "phylogeny" and "ontogeny"; he will find them constantly recurring as he progresses through the volume. They are therefore explained by the author in the general introduction. "Phylogeny is that process by which an individual or structure is transformed from a lower to a higher type"; while "degeneration is a gradual decline of the structure in type." Ontogeny may be briefly described as the "development of the individual man," and it does not repeat all the steps of phylogeny, but assumes the essential characters of the race rather quickly." These points
being borne in mind, it will be seen that phylogeny and degeneration go hand in hand in man's ontogeny. Another way of putting this would be to say that in the transformation of the individual or structure to a higher type certain structures which become useless undergo degeneration. Progression takes place at the expense of disused organs, and so environment by leading to disuse comes to exert influence on development. The "law of economy of growth" is referred to, but for a fuller explanation the reader must consult Chapter II, where he will find it more or less harmonised with such other laws as survival of the fittest, natural selection, struggle for existence, and the law of compensation (p. 19).

Having got so far, we must glance at the body of the book. The text may be regarded in three sections. In the first of these (Chapters I-VII) we have an account of development of man, with special descriptions of the development of various organs. Having finished his survey of development the author then devotes a chapter to what he calls "periods of stress," or disturbances of physiologic balance. The first period occurs in the first third of embryonic life, i.e., when structures are being differentiated, and when the most marked deformities occur. But the effect of intra-uterine stress may not be seen till long after. Of extra-uterine periods we have the dentitions, puberty, climacteric, &c. The power to pass through these periods unscathed depends on the condition of the foetus, and this again on inherited and maternal conditions, but especially the latter. But, looked at broadly, the periods of stress and their resulting degeneracies are all factors in the evolutional progress, and it is only in the more extreme cases that they are pathological. In the second group of chapters (IX-XIV) instability of the nervous system is considered in causal relation to nutritive disturbances; and the subject of constitutional degeneracies in various structures normal, or passing, or past in the evolution of man, is also taken up. The third and largest section deals with degeneration of the face, jaws, and teeth.

This work is one which should appeal to a wide circle of professional men. For the medical reader there would seem to be an undue dwelling on dental matters; but we confess it would be rather difficult to indicate precisely what should be omitted. A specially good feature is the summary at the end
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of each chapter; this fully counterbalances the voluminous text. It is at first rather depressing to see the pictures of various stigmata of degeneracy, and to realise how often they are to be met with in daily life; but this feeling is corrected when it is remembered that "a man is not necessarily a degenerate in the complete sense of the term because he possesses stigmata" (p. 129). The text is freely illustrated, and the volume is one which deserves a large circulation. It represents a vast amount of labour on the part of the author. He has been ably seconded by his publishers in producing a notable work.

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Insanity and Mental Deficiency in Relation to Legal Responsibility. By William G. H. Cook, LL.D. Lond. London: George Routledge & Sons, Limited. 1921. (10s. 6d. net.)

This book, which was the author's thesis for the degree of Doctor of Laws in the University of London, deals with the difficult question of insanity and mental deficiency in relation to civil responsibility. While discussing more particularly the English law on the subject, in which he shows the changes that have taken place in judicial opinion, he extends his survey over the law as applied in other countries. He writes clearly and ably, and, while his book appeals more to the legal profession, it will be found useful to members of the medical profession who are called in to give expert evidence in cases in which the question of responsibility arises.

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The Surgical Exposure of the Deep-Seated Blood-Vessels. By J. Fiolle, M.D., and J. Delmas, M.D. With 34 original illustrations by H. Beaufour. Translated and Edited by C. G. Cumston, M.D. London: W. Heinemann. 1921. (8s. 6d. net.)

Dr. Cumston is convinced that few medical works in any language are worthy of being translated. He thinks that the present forms an exception, and so he offers it to English readers. The thesis which the authors put forward is that deeply-placed arteries can only be properly exposed by incisions
of much greater length than has been the custom. Cogent reasons are advanced in support of this view, and the authors proceed to give detailed descriptions of their method of approaching the main arterial trunks and neighbouring veins. The work is distinctly original—some might think it revolutionary—and the steps of the various operations are beautifully illustrated. The translation is good, but here and there are some minor errors, e.g., when gastrocnemius is mentioned for gemelli, or is it quadratus? We cordially endorse Sir D'Arcy Power’s statement in the preface that the book is “a monograph to be consulted in the difficult cases which are occasionally met with in the practice of every surgeon, even in civil life.” We have no hesitation in commending it to our surgical readers.

The Clinical Method in the Study of Disease. By R. M. Wilson, M.B., Ch.B. London: Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 1921. (5s. net.)

This book is based on the works of the late Dr. Horace Dobell. Dr. Dobell was a skilful and clear-sighted clinician, and believed that progress in medicine was achieved by observation and experience, combined with vigorous thinking. In recent years the importance of the laboratory side of medicine had been unduly magnified, and the interpretation of symptoms somewhat neglected. This little book shows from the writings of Dobell that he realised and taught the enormous importance of the interpretation of symptoms. The book is well written, and a very pleasant and profitable hour may be spent in reading it.

Medical Examination for Life Insurance. By Thomas Lister, C.B.E., M.D. London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1921. (10s. 6d. net.)

The aim of this book, as stated in the preface, is to treat only of the application of medicine to the business problems involved in life insurance. It is intended to help the practitioner to make his medical report of maximum value to his head office. The author has a long experience of life insurance work, and
may be said to have successfully attained his object. As he admits, some of his statements are open to controversy, and occasionally his meaning is a little obscure. The statement that “ptosis of one of the upper lids requires rejection” is rather sweeping, and Bell’s facial paralysis is not a “cerebral monoplegia.” A detailed description of the method of using Benedict’s test for glucose would be useful. The book will be found helpful by all who examine candidates for life insurance, and especially by junior examiners.

NEW EDITIONS.

A Synopsis of Medicine. By Henry Letheby Tidy, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.Lond. Second Edition, Revised. Bristol: John Wright and Sons, Limited. 1922. (21s. net.)

The first edition of this work was published in 1920, and was soon exhausted, so great was its popularity. Coming so soon after its predecessor this edition shows very little change. Its general arrangement follows very closely that of Osler’s Principles and Practice of Medicine, and thus it is of special value for a rapid revision of any particular subject. It is not intended to replace a text-book, but it is what it professes to be—a reliable synopsis of medicine.

Index of Treatment by Various Writers. Edited by Robert Hutchison, M.D., F.R.C.P., and James Sherren, C.B.E., F.R.C.S. Eighth Edition. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Limited. 1921. (42s. net.)

The present edition of this excellent reference book of treatment has been revised and enlarged. Many articles have been entirely rewritten, while new articles on encephalitis, kala azar, snake-bite, transfusion, &c., have been inserted. The type is plainer, and the page is slightly larger. This edition is thus even more valuable than its predecessors, and it can be thoroughly recommended to practitioners as a trustworthy guide to treatment.