NEW BOOKS.

Auricular Flutter. By W. T. Ritchie, M.D. Pp. xii. + 144. With 107 Illustrations. Edinburgh and London: W. Green & Son, Ltd. 1914. Price 10s. 6d. net.

Readers of this Journal, of the Quarterly Journal of Medicine, and of Heart are aware of the honourable place taken by the author of this book in the new field of cardiology. In this monograph he brings together and largely extends much of the work in which he has been engaged in recent years, and at the same time places before us all that is at present known regarding "auricular flutter," the most recently differentiated of abnormal heart conditions. Many will be glad to have the clear description in the opening chapter of the atrio-ventricular conducting system, the jugular pulsations, electro-cardiograms, various kinds of extrasystole, and auricular fibrillation. "Auricular flutter" is defined as a "pathological action of the auricles characterised by rhythmic co-ordinate contractions of their musculature at a rate that is greatly accelerated, and is usually between 250 and 300 per minute." The term was first applied to the human auricles by Jolly and Ritchie in 1911, and was taken from papers on the physiology of the auricles, published in 1887 and 1888 by MacWilliam of Aberdeen, in which he described a condition experimentally induced identical in all its essential features with the clinical disorder now differentiated. After a summary of what is known of the etiology and morbid anatomy, the chapter is reached which deals with records of cases. They are as yet not many, and we are glad to have some of Dr. Ritchie's own cases given with fulness. Some of them have been followed with graphic records over several years, and show physiological rhythm, flutter, and fibrillation interchanging with one another at different times. The symptoms are shown to be mainly due, not to the auricles directly, but to their influence on the ventricles in producing acceleration. The ventricular rate is usually one-half of the auricular rate, that is, 125 to 150 per minute. Diastole is greatly curtailed and the ventricular pulsations weakened. Most of the cases come on in the course of chronic heart disease, and it is easy to see how a presystolic murmur may then disappear. But flutter occurs also with partial or complete heart-block, and even in apparently healthy hearts paroxysmal attacks may cause alarming symptoms. Valuable chapters are devoted to graphic records, to the action of the vagus and sympathetic, and to the action of digitalis and its allies. In the section on diagnosis useful suggestions are given for suspecting the presence of flutter, but in many cases the polygraph or galvanometer must be used to make things clear. Full consideration (with tracings) is given to the conditions for which flutter might be mistaken, viz. physiological rhythm without and with acceleration, extrasystolic arrhythmia, nodal rhythm,
and auricular fibrillation. Chapters on prognosis and treatment conclude the work.

We expect that the peculiar merits of this book will quickly meet with a wide recognition amongst the scientifically-inclined physicians of Europe and America. There is evidence of a vast amount of original observation and close thinking, the exposition is lucid, the graphic records are clear and numerous, and the work is comprehensive. So we heartily congratulate Dr. Ritchie on the successful accomplishment of his task.

**Diagnosis of the Malignant Tumours of the Abdominal Viscera.** By Professor Rudolph Schmidt, Innsbrück. Authorised English Version by Joseph Burke, Sc.D., M.D., Buffalo, N.Y. London: William Heinemann. 1914. Price 17s. 6d. net.

The diagnosis of abdominal growths can never fail to be a source of interest, alike to the physician and the surgeon. The difficulties attending their recognition and their relations to the viscera, largely arising from the extent and depth of the abdominal cavity, lead probably to more errors in diagnosis here than in any other region of the body, despite the aid available from recent science. Accordingly, any light that can be obtained upon the subject from any quarter must be welcomed.

The volume now before us deals exclusively with the diagnosis of malignant tumours. It is written mainly from the clinical standpoint, and no one can fail to recognise the work of a clinician of wide experience, masterly grasp, and sound judgment.

After a careful account of the physical examination of the abdomen for tumours and their manifestations, the author proceeds to the consideration of the diagnosis of malignant growths in the various viscera, beginning with cancer of the stomach, to which subject a large space is devoted. The symptoms and evidences of this condition are analysed with minuteness and accuracy, and it is hardly possible to find anything omitted which is capable of throwing light upon the existence of the disease. In difficult or doubtful cases the importance of systematic examination of the faeces for evidences of hemorrhage, however slight, is rightly emphasised. The same thoroughness of investigation characterises the chapters on malignant growths in the intestines, the liver, the pancreas, and the kidney. A large part of the work is taken up with illustrative cases drawn from the author's extensive experience, the details of no fewer than 105 cases of cancer of the stomach being recorded. A smaller number, we venture to think, might have sufficed.

The work is full of valuable information for the physician, whether engaged in hospital or private practice. The translation has been carefully done, although it must be admitted the book is not altogether an easy one to read.
**Meningococcus Meningitis.** By Henry Heiman, M.D., and Samuel Feldstein, M.D. With Introduction by Henry Koplik, M.D. Pp. xiv. + 305. With 39 Illustrations. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1914. Price 12s. 6d. net.

During the last ten years the prevalence of cerebro-spinal meningitis in its epidemic form in Europe and America has led to a more exact and detailed knowledge of this interesting disease, and contributions to the literature of the subject have been very numerous. We welcome, therefore, this volume, which not only contains a most admirable summary of all the most important observations recently made, but also embodies the extensive experience gained by the authors in Koplik's wards. It is written in a clear and attractive style, is very practical in character, and is admirably illustrated. The chapters on diagnosis are very well done, and cannot fail to be of great assistance, even to practitioners with considerable experience of the disease. As regards treatment, the authors lay stress on a manometer being always employed when fluid is being drawn off from the spinal canal, and give detailed instructions for the administration of serum. While they themselves have used Flexner's serum, they describe the methods of preparation of those of Dopter, Kolle, and Wassermann, etc., and do not appear to think that there is much difference in the effectiveness of the different serums. Untoward results following the injections into the spinal canal are discussed, and the authors consider that vigorous artificial respiration is the most reliable treatment when the respiration begins to change its character and shock is threatened. They give the excellent advice that no patient should be left immediately after injection, but that medical assistance should be available at once in case of accidents. In performing lumbar puncture they prefer, we are glad to note, the horizontal position. We can heartily recommend this book to all interested in the subject as a most practical and trustworthy guide.

**Treatment of Neurasthenia.** By Dr. Paul Hartenberg. Translated by Ernest Playfair, M.B., M.R.C.P. Pp. 283. London: Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton. 1914. Price 6s.

The author regards "fatigability" as the pathognomonic symptom of neurasthenia, and considers that this represents a lowered nerve potential comparable to the lowered E.M.F. of a run-down battery. Congenital defect of nerve potential, toxemias, and depressing emotions may all contribute to bring this about. Great care in expenditure of energy is therefore advised to all neurasthenics. The tissues must be built up. Drugs are prescribed, not only those with a tonic action, but also the whole class of the sedatives, with a freedom that borders on the dangerous side. The physical methods of electricity, douches, and dry heat are used extensively. The author admittedly uses
psychotherapy, but only in an indirect way. The original has been rendered into good English.

**Renal Diagnosis in Medicine and Surgery.** By Dr. Victor Blum. English Translation by Wilfred B. Christopherson. Pp. 144. With 16 Illustrations. London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd. 1914. Price 7s. 6d. net.

The tests that can be usefully applied for estimating renal competency are here reviewed, and then the significance of functional diagnosis in surgical and medical treatment is discussed and illustrated by typical case records. Surgeons will read with interest the section on the indications for prostatectomy, while physicians will find of use the table for the differential diagnosis of the various forms of nephritis based upon functional tests and symptomatology. Cryoscopy and ureteral catheterisation are looked upon as indispensable aids, and experimental polyuria as a valuable test. The phthalein method is held to be of more use for medical than surgical diagnosis, being too delicate for partial unilateral lesions. The book can be recommended to all who are specially interested in diseases of the kidneys.

**Appendicitis: A Plea for Immediate Operation.** By Edmund Owen. Pp. viii. + 214. With 4 Illustrations. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd. 1914. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Mr. Edmund Owen, in this readable and convincing book, states that his object has been to help in making the immediate operation the routine treatment of appendicitis. It is of interest in his remarks upon the causation of appendicitis that he emphasises the rôle played by the ever-present road dust, the result of motor traffic. The book deals with the diagnosis, treatment, and after-treatment of appendicitis, and through it all there is manifested and emphasised the undoubted claim for the immediate operative treatment, with which it may be said practically every surgeon is in agreement. All general practitioners and physicians who have not yet been convinced would do well to spend an hour or so in the perusal of this work.

**The Practice of Surgery.** By Russell Howard, M.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.S. Pp. 1227. With 531 Illustrations. London: Edward Arnold. 1914. Price 21s. net.

The author of this new text-book indicates in his preface that it is intended to furnish students with an embodiment of the surgical teaching received at the London Hospital. It has therefore a special interest and appeal, but on this account can hardly be expected to compete with others written from a more catholic standpoint. It is very comprehensive and its arrangement is good. About equal portions
are devoted to general and to special surgery, and the latter part, while full enough, is not unduly detailed for the student. The teaching as a whole in regard to methods of treatment is essentially conservative, and the student adopting it will certainly only err on the safe side. Operative treatment of fractures, however, is rather favoured. On the other hand, for instance, the results of nerve anastomosis are stated not to be very satisfactory so far. While in its purely surgical aspects this work may be said very fairly to represent modern views, the same can scarcely be claimed in regard to a good deal of the pathological and bacteriological teaching. For example, to say that it is at present undecided whether bovine tubercle bacilli are identical with the human type or incapable of causing tuberculosis in man, is to ignore the work of the Tuberculosis Commission. Again, it seems a pity that students should still be sent into practice with the impression that the pathology and clinical features of the varied forms of chronic arthritis, here grouped under the heading of osteo-arthritis, are similar.

In the matter of illustrations the book is well furnished, and their reproduction is satisfactory, only a few of the half-tone blocks being somewhat obscure. The subjects are carefully chosen, but more value might have been gained for them if they had been correlated to the text.

The British Journal of Surgery. Edited by E. W. Hey Groves. Vol. I. Pp. vii. + 748. With 484 Illustrations. Bristol: John Wright & Sons, Ltd. 1914. Price 30s. net.

On the appearance of the first number of this new venture we anticipated for it a successful career, and the issue of the first complete volume confirms us in the belief that British surgery has at last found a worthy representation in current periodical literature. The original papers range over all departments of modern surgery and are of the highest scientific value. Short biographical notes on the old masters in surgery, with excellent portraits, are interspersed; and a series of articles descriptive of the more important modern clinics in various parts of the world keep the reader in touch with all that is progressive in surgery. Each number contains a sort of "confessional," devoted to "Instructive Mistakes," which offer as much valuable instruction to the reader as they must have done to the (anonymous) penitents who record them. The illustrations are exceptionally good.

Ophthalmoscopic Diagnosis. By Dr. C. Adam, Berlin. Translated by Dr. M. L. Foster. Pp. xx. + 225. With 104 Illustrations. London: Heinemann (Rebman, Ltd.). 1913. Price 25s. net.

The distinguished German ophthalmic surgeon has produced a very useful book, which he will not allow to be described as an atlas lest it should not be recognised that its true function is to be a guide to
diagnosis, and not merely a series of illustrations of various physiological and pathological aspects of the fundus. He is quite right to adopt this attitude, though his contention in the preface that the first to use the ophthalmoscopic sign (incorrectly called "symptom") was Elsching is open to question, and the book under discussion is wisely built on these lines. It begins with a discussion of methods, the directions for which are somewhat laborious; they might quite well have been briefer with equal accuracy—with some of them indeed we do not agree. For example, the illustration on page 8, intended as a model, shows an observer committing at least three faults, in our opinion. The surgeon who issues a book intended to illustrate the fundus lays himself open to criticism of all kinds, and there are several of the diagrams which do not appear to us to be very conclusive or indeed quite accurate; and there is none which really illustrates the common form of disseminated choroiditis—a disease so important to the clinician that one which bears this label is too extreme to be a good guide for a beginner. On general grounds would it not be better to discard the term papilla altogether, since we know that no papilla, properly so called, exists, and call it a disc? Certain of the figures are not too good, but it must be admitted that the great majority are excellent, and if we pick a hole here and there, it is yet true that the book is in general terms an excellent one, and well calculated to teach the student of the subject, and incidentally to enhance still further the high reputation of its author. Two improvements may, without harm, be suggested as possible—first, that there are too many irritating divisions and subdivisions in the text, and that both the black and white illustrations in the letterpress and the coloured full-page representations of the fundus are called "Figures"; as these are not consecutive, one is troubled by having to search for the proper page in following up a reference. They should be called Figure in the one case and Plate in the other.

Guide to the Microscopic Examination of the Eye. By Professor R. Greeff. Translated from the Third German Edition by Hugh Walker, M.A., M.B., C.M., Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow. Pp. 86. London: The Ophthalmoscope Press. Price 7s. 6d. net.

This standard work by Professor Greeff has been of great use to the laboratory worker in this particular line. The book gives in small compass the most convenient and most approved methods of preparing the ocular tissues for microscopic examination. The instructions are singularly clear and practical, and the methods described are always those with which the author is really familiar. The work of translation has been very ably carried out by Mr. Walker.