A Mirror for Surgeons: Selected Readings in Surgery. By Sir D'Arcy Power, K.B.E., F.R.C.S., Consulting Surgeon to and Archivist of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1939.

This little volume of selected readings in surgery by Sir D'Arcy Power contains material already made familiar to surgeons in this country in the excellent series of papers published in the British Journal of Surgery in the past few years under the title “Eponyms.” In the introduction Dr. Francis R. Packard says that Sir D'Arcy “has chosen twenty-two of the great surgeons who have contributed to the advancement of surgery from an art to a science; beginning with John of Arderne in the fourteenth century, he gives extracts from the writings of the great British surgeons down to Jonathan Hutchinson and Macewen and Lister; Ambroise Paré figures in the list, and there are extracts from the writings of three Americans—Halsted, Bigelow and Marion Sims.” Each notice begins with a short biographical sketch; then follow typical extracts from the writings of the surgeons, the extracts selected being descriptions of operations or observations most closely associated in the minds of surgeons of the present day with the great men of the past.

From the works of Ambroise Paré, whose caption, to use a strictly modern word, is “a greatly beloved French Surgeon,” six short extracts are given. These deal with his treatment of gunshot wounds in 1545; his experiences at Turin when he met a surgeon who held him off for two years before he would part with his receipt of a balm with which he dressed all kinds of wounds; the ligature of arteries; the treatment of malingerers; and one of them entitled “Treatment of the Wounded” contains the famous dictum “I dressed him and God healed him.” John Hunter, “the Experimental Surgeon,” is made tell the story again of the operation of ligature of the femoral artery, and how it had its origin in no chance moment but was the result of careful planning and of experiments performed long before upon animals. The extracts from Macewen’s writings (he is labelled “a Pioneer in Surgery”) deal with “Antiseptic Osteotomy” and “Two Cases of Cerebral Surgery.” Henry Jacob Bigelow (“Surgeon,
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Teacher and Inventor”) is naturally brought before the reader as the surgeon who improved Lithotrity. Sir James Paget was “The very wise Surgeon,” Sir Jonathan Hutchinson “A Great Teacher,” Sir Charles Bell “Surgeon and Artist.” No caption is appended to the name of “Joseph, Lord Lister,” and one admires the restraint of the selector of these mirror reflections. Extracts from the writings of Maister Peter Lowe reveal the pleasant precise style of the Founder of the Royal Faculty. In his case only the caption has gone wrong, for he is credited with being the “Founder of Glasgow University,” and Sir D’Arcy Power has undertaken to put this right in the next edition.

“A Mirror for Surgeons” is an intriguing title for a fireside book, even a bedside book, which all surgeons, young and old, may well add to their library and put on a shelf not far away from the armchair.

Diseases of the Nervous System. By F. M. R. Walshe, O.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. 1940. (12s. 6d.)

This book is divided into two parts. In the first, the principles of neurological diagnosis are discussed simply from the anatomical and physiological standpoints. Part Two deals with the various diseases of the nervous system, the author having devoted space to each in accordance with its importance in clinical medicine. A chapter on the psychoneuroses, and a short schema for the investigation of the nervous system are included.

The book has been written for the use of students and medical practitioners, for which reason certain procedures—clinical, laboratory and neurological—have been omitted, on the ground that they belong to the province of the neurological specialist. To the reviewer, who lays no claim to being a neurologist, it seems that in some places the subject-matter has been dealt with rather summarily, thus detracting to a certain extent from its interest. For those for whom the work is intended, however, the book can be set down as a commendable effort to present a difficult subject in a concise manner.

Cancer: its Cause, Prevention and Cure. By Edward Henty Smalpage, M.B., Ch.M. (Syd.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.) London: J. Whitaker & Sons, Limited. 1940. (7s. 6d.)

After some preliminary pseudo-philosophical remarks on the Divine inspiration of Mankind, the author leads us to believe that no man
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has any personal control over his own earthly endeavours. From the biblical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the conversion of Lot's wife into a "pillar of salt," he derives his inspiration that "burning salt" is the cause of malignant disease.

The author evidently holds homoeopathic views, for he expands upon the adage "similia similibus curentur." He infers that the acquisition of sufficient wisdom by man will enable him to acquire victory, not merely over all human diseases ("pathologies" as he calls them), but even over death.

Further comment is unnecessary.

The Bottom of the Well. By Josephine Bell. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1940. (7s. 6d. net.)

From the dust-jacket of this volume we learn that it is the work of one who up till now has confined her efforts to the writing of detective stories.

In this new departure we have a novel dealing with the love-affair of a bacteriology Research Scholar and the daughter of the senior Consulting Physician of the same hospital. Her father is a wealthy man; the research scholar's financial resources are exiguous. Notwithstanding the disparity in means the young people become engaged, with the consent of the girl's parents. The man is devoted to his laboratory researches; the girl has difficulty in understanding that devotion, and the position becomes strained. The development and conclusion of the story we leave to the reader to discover for himself.

The authoress gives us a good picture of the laboratory and of the researches carried out therein. The psychology of the various characters, and their reactions to their circumstances are less firmly drawn, and will be judged by the reader according to his own criteria. The book is not a treatise but a novel, and as such it may quite honestly be recommended for recreational reading.
The appearance of an eleventh edition of this well-known book marks another important step in the rapidly increasing knowledge of the diseases of warm climates, and Dr. Manson-Bahr is to be congratulated on his industry in collecting the results of so much work in research and treatment, and also on his skill in presenting these new facts in such a practical and readable form.

It has been most interesting and instructive to compare this new volume with Manson's first edition, from which the present reviewer got his introduction to this branch of medicine forty years ago, and also to compare it with the eighth edition published in 1925.

In 1898 a couple of small pages told all there was to tell about kala-azar, whose cause and cure were unlike unknown, while now 46 large pages are given to Leishmaniasis in its various forms. In those early days "negro lethargy" or the "sleeping sickness of the Congo" was known and described clinically, but its cause was still unknown, and the huge mass of literature devoted to human trypanosomiasis was in the future.

One of the chief difficulties in dealing with so rapidly expanding a subject is to keep the subject-matter within the reasonable limits of a manual, while not omitting anything new of permanent value and importance. The editor, while preserving a considerable proportion of Sir Patrick Manson's original work, such as the sections on malaria, cholera and filarial disease, has cut out a good deal that is now of historical interest only. Nevertheless the book has grown from 600 pages in 1898 to 895 in 1925, and 1083 in 1940.

In this eleventh edition there is an entirely new introduction of 52 pages on "Life in the Tropics." This is full of most valuable information and practical advice, the fruit of many years of personal observation and experience on the part of the Editor. Any practitioner who has to examine candidates for service abroad would do well to study the pages on "Passing candidates for the Tropics" and on examining those going back again to duty after home leave.
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In the body of the work there has been a considerable re-arrangement and re-classification of various subjects. Thus the "Fevers" have been divided into groups according to their aetiology; into those caused by protozoa, spirochaetes, rickettsias, bacteria, viruses and atmospheric conditions.

A section headed in 1925 "General Diseases of Undetermined Nature" is now described as "Vitamin Deficiency Diseases," indicating the progress made in the past 15 years in our knowledge of beri-beri, pellagra and tropical scurvy.

The Typhus group is discussed in a section almost entirely re-written, and no fewer than ten varieties of disease due to rickettsia infection are described and contrasted in tabular form. Lice, fleas, ticks and mites are all implicated as carriers, and animal hosts, apart from man, are numerous and varied. Almost all this is the result of quite recent investigation and the whole subject seems to become more involved and full of problems with each succeeding year.

A noteworthy change is the transfer of yellow fever from the Leptospirosis group to the virus group. In 1898 Sanarelli's bacillus icteroides held the field as the probable cause of yellow fever. By 1925 it had given place to Noguchi's leptospiira icteroides, first described in 1918. Now this also has faded out, and it seems pretty well established that yellow fever is caused by a virus carried by a mosquito, the Aedes aegypti. Recently it has been found possible to prepare an attenuated virus which has been largely used as a prophylactic for people going to West Africa or other yellow fever region, and the method has been very successful.

The whole of this section on virus diseases well repays careful reading. It is prefaced by a short introduction on the viruses in general, and in addition to yellow fever it deals with Rift Valley Fever of Kenya, psittacosis of parrots, rabies, dengue, phlebotomus or sand-fly fever, and the pock diseases, smallpox, vaccinia, and alastrim.

Within recent years intensive study has been made of the vitamins, and Dr. Manson-Bahr has prefaced his account of beri-beri, pellagra and tropical scurvy with a short and lucid summary of present views on the relation of these substances to deficiencies of diet and impairment of health. The description of these three diseases contains many new points, and the remarkable results of nicotinic acid on pellagra, first observed three years ago, are endorsed by Dr. Manson-Bahr.

Space forbids detailed mention of many interesting subjects dealt with in other sections of the Manual, in all of which information
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has been brought up to date. The book is very well produced, with plates, maps, charts, and numerous figures in the text, and a very good index which makes reference easy.

In these days when there is so much coming and going between the ends of the earth this volume can be cordially recommended not only to the medical man going to a post abroad, but also to the practitioner at home, who may at any time be called on to deal with some obscure condition in a patient home from foreign lands, and who will also find that his views on disease in general have been stimulated and widened to a remarkable extent.

Forensic Medicine. By SYDNEY SMITH, M.D., F.R.C.P. Seventh Edition. London: J. & A. Churchill, Limited. 1940. (25s.)

The fact that this is the seventh edition of this excellent text book speaks for its general worth and popularity. As a text book for students it is full and complete without being diffuse, while it makes a capital reference book for practitioners who are not specialists in medical jurisprudence. It is well arranged, starting with Legal Procedure, Evidence, Reports, Court Procedure, &c., and then passing on to death and the subsequent changes, before discussing the real medico-legal aspects of the subject. The chapter on Identification is very full and deals very well with the various points and methods, including the value of hairs and a description of the methods employed in the Ruxton case. The discussion of gunshot and other wounds leaves no room for ambiguity as to what is meant. The examination of blood stains is given very fully, including the methods of blood-grouping and its relative value in cases. The inclusion of the gases of warfare in this as well as in the last edition, in the chapter dealing with irrespirable gases, is to be commended as being useful as well as specially topical. The other parts of the work give full value to the various subjects in the way of detail and conclusions therefrom. The part which includes Toxicology embraces all the generally known poisons, with their symptoms and treatment, and is of extreme value for reference on the subject, having in addition appendices on their analysis and recognition. The book is easily read, the matter being stated concisely and without excess of description, and the illustrations are good.