

BOOK REVIEWS

the chronic infective diseases (lupus, tuberculosis, syphilis, glanders, leprosy, sclerosis and actinomycosis) of the upper air-passages fills a hundred pages. The manifestations of the acute specific fevers (measles, scarlatina, variola, varicella, pertussis, typhoid, influenza and diphtheria) occupy about twenty-five pages. The next part of the book is devoted to some general affections of the nose and throat, including gout, rheumatism, myxœdema, acromegaly, angio-neurotic œdema, herpes, pemphigus, exudative erythema, foreign bodies in the air and food passages, median cervical cysts and fistulæ and mimicry of disease. The next and final part of the book describes some of the more extensive and radical operative procedures on the nose and larynx. Formulæ and an exhaustive index complete the book.

It will be seen by the scope of the work which the above summary of its contents is intended to exhibit, that this is a thoroughgoing treatise in which the field covered by the title has been thoroughly worked out. The reviewer would be pleased if he could give some idea of the author's style which carries much in comparatively few words and conveys to the reader the earnest convictions of the writer from an evidently wide clinical experience and enthusiastic study of the literature of the subject. Very little of importance has been passed by without some, and usually helpful, comment. While not encyclopædic, the book is inclusive and satisfying.

WILLIAM C. BRAISLIN.

DISEASES OF THE SPINAL CORD AND ITS MEMBRANES. By CHARLES A. ELSBERG. Saunders Co. 8vo. pp. 330.

DR. Elsberg's work is noticeably free from the atmosphere of "compilation" which forms a distinct halo around so many works in medicine and surgery. This recent contribution to the surgery of the spinal region presents a striking contrast, in that it is largely made up of the author's actual experiences in the various conditions portrayed; from inspection and diagnosis, through operation and post-operative treatment until the patient is discharged, thus giving it a unique value. As it correctly states in the preface, those underlying principles which have stood the test of time are incorporated, as in any science, the fundamental facts already demonstrated are always employed in widening our horizon toward bigger basic truths. However, the work in question distinguishes itself not only in its particular field but as a type of surgical writing, the style of which is indeed none too apparent at the present time.

The book must be commended for its practical size and lack of great bulk making it convenient for both student and practitioner and for the

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absence in its text of superfluous, extraneous and irrelevant material. Particular note should be made of the logical order of arrangement of the various chapters and the admirable system of indexing, which is clear, concise and time saving. The illustrations are especially valuable on account of their anatomic and pathologic accuracy, their generous variety and the many excellent roentgenograms included.

It fills a long-felt need in neurologic surgery for competent and constructive work in this field.

The book is divided into three parts with each division complete in its particular phase covered, thus making an important reference for any particular branch of the subject when a complete survey is not desired.

Part I.—Incorporates the surgical anatomy of the vertebral column and the spinal cord, the normal and pathological physiology of the spinal cord, the localization of motor, sensory and reflex functions in the different segments, symptomatology of spinal disease, the symptoms of spinal disease at different levels of the cord, methods of examination, the use of the X-ray here and the differential diagnosis of surgical spinal lesions.

In taking up the anatomy of the vertebral column a complete résumé is not attempted, the author merely refreshes some more prominent facts and emphasizes the salient points of the osseous and muscular coverings of the cord from the surgical side.

The membranes of the cord are briefly discussed with respect to their anatomical relation to the cord and nerve roots, their formation of surgical landmarks, and the importance of the subarachnoid space as a cistern for cerebrospinal fluid.

The surgical value of a thorough knowledge of the anatomic variations in the relation between cord and vertebrae at different levels of the spine, is clearly and briefly stated. In touching on the blood supply and main fiber tracts of the cord, the vessels are covered in a general way to emphasize the high vascularity of this region and to indicate certain incisions of choice when working near them.

A very practical table of the main fibre tracts is represented.

The physiology of the cord serves to refresh and summarize those facts of primary importance which must always be in play when considering spinal lesions from any standpoint.

Variations in symptoms are explained with respect to changes in anatomy at different levels as well as results following partial and complete damage to various structures involved.

Highly interesting observations have been made by the author concerning the sensitiveness of the cord and its coverings. This section embraces a table explaining the segmentary localization of the muscles

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with their functions included and must necessarily be mastered by any one attempting to correctly interpret abnormalities of those functions when due to spinal origin.

In recording the symptomatology of various lesions a careful analysis has been made to show the points of contrast between those of intramedullary and those of extramedullary origin, and stress is placed upon a proper recognition of the *sequence* of symptoms in order that a wise judgment may be formed when finally summing up a given condition.

With completeness and system a chapter describes the method of examination followed by the author, including a timely reminder that it is only by careful, thorough and repeated examinations that a correct diagnosis can be made and the exact localization of a spinal lesion be determined and the advisability of taking nothing for granted.

In the chapter on Roentgen-ray, the importance of this procedure is emphasized for every patient before operative intervention, not only to substantiate but in many instances to aid in ruling out a particular condition, and, further, it is wisely cited that the roentgenogram will in a large number of patients reveal the nature of the process which is causing the spinal symptoms and will offer information which may contraindicate operation, while in others the picture makes it imperative. To correctly read the findings in these X-rays, the well-known fact is repeated that the observer must have had considerable experience, including a study of the normal vertebral column.

Part I concludes by summarizing the main points concerning differential diagnosis, not only between lesions of cerebral and spinal origin, but also those which may be successfully relieved by surgery and the other class which by their nature, extent and location, makes any thought of operation an absurdity. A point noted and never to be lost sight of is the fact that a patient may have more than one condition of the spine at the same time, most frequently a luetic condition associated with some other process; tumor or what not.

Part II first treats of lumbar puncture and makes it clear that this operation is in no sense a formidable procedure and should in the rarest instances be attended by untoward results if a few fundamental principles governing the technic are observed. The wide and important range of conditions in which this may and should be advantageously employed has not had sufficient emphasis during recent years. This chapter is complete and should give any reliable man confidence to resort to the operation whenever indication arises.

The relative merits of hemi and complete laminectomy are discussed by Dr. Elsberg with the result that the complete operation is much

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to be preferred and the doubtful benefits of the hemi laminectomy exist only when no exploration is necessary and when the operator wishes to divide nerve roots on but one side. The detailed technic of the author's method of laminectomy is given, including position of patient, anæsthesia, preparation and sterilization of operative field, and removal of bone until cord is exposed.

The special instruments adapted to this work are not only mentioned as each step is described, but they are also pictured, making the various stages of exposure much easier to comprehend and more readily visualized as one digests the text.

The possible dangers in different regions and the best plan of meeting these exigencies when they arise are clearly set forth.

Rhizotomy is broadly presented and after a careful analysis of the experience at large as well as his own, the author impresses the fact that it is not to be carried out for all classes of root pains, as a general panacea, but in selected patients only, and with the judgment based on a wide experience as the proper criterion for decision. A brief review including technic is made of the comparatively new operation of division of the antero-lateral tracts for pain relief. The author concludes that further experience must prove its usefulness as well as its limitations. The method of aspiration and incision of the cord is also given here.

A general consideration of the contraindications as well as the indications for laminectomy is given due emphasis. It is succinctly pointed out that the dangers should be relatively very slight when the operation is performed by the surgeon experienced in this line of work.

While the various forms of spina bifida have not in the main been attended by particularly brilliant results surgically, a section devoted to this unfortunate malformation may stimulate others to investigate and advance our present knowledge of the subject.

The material on abnormalities and diseases of the spinal vessels is graphically supplemented by the artist's drawings and the essential points in correctly recognizing and differentiating these vascular conditions are given.

One of the most important chapters of this work is that pertaining to injuries of the vertebræ, cord and nerve roots, because it is this class of traumatic spinal conditions which is most commonly encountered by the general surgeon.

The section on tumors of the vertebral column, spinal cord and membranes is covered with the thoroughness to which this part of the work is properly entitled; including many splendid illustrations demon-

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strating operative procedures involving them and showing the particular lesions at different levels of the cord.

Other pathologic conditions here considered are, inflammatory processes of the membranes, abscess of the cord, spinal complications of Pott's disease and other less common diseases of the vertebral column, making the book as complete as it is practical.

It is a guide that should prove valuable to both physician and surgeon and surely would be a distinct asset to every medical library.

HORACE G. DUNHAM.

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