

Book Reviews

The Endocrines.—By SAMUEL WYLLIS BANDLER, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.S., Professor of Gynecology in the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1920.

The aim of the work as stated in the preface is to present the basic principles of endocrinology together with their application to practical problems that confront the physician. His theory, he states, is mainly derived from clinical observation and the record of an experience with gland therapy over a period of twenty-two years. The scope of the book is considerable, inasmuch as the author believes that heredity, development, normal function of the nervous system and mind are all intimately dependent on the ductless glands.

At the present moment when facts concerning the endocrines have accumulated to such an extent that but few can be sufficiently acquainted with them to discover their applicability in practice, a working theory that is carefully founded would be acceptable even if it cannot be more than provisional. A. Biedl has done much in the matter of sifting the existing experimental data on animals critically in his careful work on internal secretions. A number of other investigators have added to these efforts. But of clinical studies and observations in the human subject, carried out in a painstaking manner, recorded in detail and accurately tabulated, there is a great dearth. Any contribution in this direction therefore must be worth while. When Bandler says in his book "these opinions are offered on the basis of therapy fortified by clinical observations," or again "if you have a theory and it works out in practice, the chances are that it is correctly founded," the hope is awakened that a series of therapeutic tests with organic extracts carefully arranged and reviewed, is to be presented by the author, but in this one is greatly disappointed.

Dr. Bandler's book, while it aims to focus attention on gland treatment, if taken literally, gives a very much exaggerated idea of the scope and value of this form of therapy. Probably this is due to the fact that a larger part of the subject matter is taken directly from the lecture room where the personality of the teacher is known and due allowance could be made for attempts to impress certain points or hold the attention of the hearer. The following extracts will serve to elucidate my meaning.

Pages 393-394. "She had a fibromyomatous uterus containing five or six separate fibroids, reaching to the umbilicus—reaching way over the pelvic brim so that I could not get my finger between it and the pelvis." * * * "so we gave her 7 grains of mammary extract, and a grain or two of the anterior lobe of the pituitary, —and after six months there was not a nodule in that uterus as large as my fist. That is not only one experience; I have had many such." * * * "I am telling you what gland extracts will do, and you can use them in cases where you don't want to operate, * * * and if you give these medicines for three or four months you may often have a uterus one-third as large as it was, even in that short time." It need hardly be commented that no one who claims to teach gynecology should make such a statement as this without being in a position to submit the most painstaking clinical records to substantiate it.

Page 336. "Exophthalmos is, in my opinion, an evidence of overactivity of the posterior pituitary."

Page 383. "Many of my pregnant patients have a transient glycosuria which disappears, and I have considered most of them as pituitary in nature."

Page 321. "Whether this overactivity of the pituitary has anything to do with gallstones, I do not know. I believe this to be the case. We do however, observe frequent association between fibromyomata of the uterus, the postpartum period, and stones in the gall bladder." All these statements in reference to increased pituitary function strangely enough remain unaccompanied by the results of exact laboratory tests to prove that a hyperactivity really exists in a given case; the sugar tolerance test, for instance, is not even mentioned.

In characterizing individual glands the anterior lobe of the pituitary and adrenal cortex are designated as essentially male glands showing a preponderating development and influence in the male in conjunction with the secretory tissue of the testes; while the pituitary posterior lobe and the thyroid on the other hand are assumed to play a larger rôle in the female. Where a few other authors have in fact held that there is a close relationship between the adrenals and certain emotions as fear and anger, Bandler goes much further in accrediting the one emotion to the medulla, and the other to the influence of the cortical portion of this gland. There are no comparative anatomic and histologic studies cited in the text to prove that actual and measurable differences exist in these glands between the male and female.

In reference to pregnancy the author says "I have frequently noted that many patients who are not nauseated are quite drowsy and sleepy. I am accustomed to tell such sleepy patients that this is a favorable sign as nausea is not a probable annoyance from which they will suffer." * * * He also states "women whose menstruation occurs at thirty-five day intervals are in need of endocrine stimulation, they are more likely to begin labor at a date later than estimated." How helpful it would be if Bandler proved this to be correct.

On page 331, the symptoms and signs suggestive of endocrinal disturbance are grouped to help in clinical observation; but in order to safeguard against error in their interpretation, those which have been thoroughly established should be treated separately from those which are not.

Of the cases (pages 397 to 475) finally cited to furnish the basis for the author's conclusions, a considerable number must be eliminated as inconclusive because the period of observation is too short, less than three months, and often only several weeks. In a second group, definite conclusions cannot be drawn about any particular preparation because a number of substances are administered at the same time and the therapy is frequently changed. In a third group the exact duration of treatment is indefinite or not mentioned; neither is any allowance made throughout for the numerous sources of error in interpreting a patient's report.

Generally speaking the book is original in the manner in which the subject is dealt with, and may even help to stimulate observation along certain lines, but, unfortunately the author often expresses himself with a finality which is certainly not justified by the data which he submits; and, coming as they do from a teacher in gynecology, some of his assertions may be distinctly misleading.

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Extrauterine Pregnancy.—By EDWARD A. SCHUMANN, M.D., Lecturer on Obstetrics, Jefferson Medical College; Gynecologist and Obstetrician to the Philadelphia General Hospital, etc. With 71 illustrations. Gynecological and Obstetrical Monographs. D. Appleton and Co., New York and London, 1921.

It was a pleasure to read this book and it is a privilege to recommend it to others. Authors of monographs have this advantage over textbook writers that they need not anxiously consider the available space. Schumann, however, has not abused