

the events of the last war. The increase of allergic conditions corresponded also to the increasing risks of exogenous and alimentary factors. As R. M. B. MacKenna points out in his survey of military dermatology, eczema and sensitization eruptions of exogenous origin are an ever-increasing hazard.

The relatively smaller spread of parasitic and contagious skin diseases and of venereal diseases during the Second War was due to the higher standard of education, to improved personal and public hygiene achieved by the Czech people during the years of their independence between the wars, and last, not least, to the skill and efforts of the Czech medical profession.

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#### THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF DERMATOLOGY AND SYPHILOLOGY.

THE 28th Annual Meeting was held in Belfast on 2 and 3 July 1948, the president, Dr. Ivan McCaw, being in the chair. The discussions took place in the Whitla Medical Institute, and the clinical meeting was held at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

During the preliminary business meeting reference was made to the present position concerning the institution of a diploma, and the impending meeting of the Royal College of Physicians to consider possible changes in the examination for the membership of the college. The reports of the editor and treasurer were received and approved, and their authors congratulated. Special reference was made to the work of Dr. Goldsmith, who is now relinquishing the post of editor after ten years' service to the association. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year :

*President.*—Dr. Sydney Thomson.

*Treasurer.*—Sir Archibald Gray.

*Hon. Secretary.*—Dr. J. E. M. Wigley.

*Editor.*—Dr. F. Ray Bettley.

*Assistant Editor.*—Dr. G. W. Bamber.

Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee : Drs. A. Bigham, R. T. Brain, W. Freudenthal, W. N. Goldsmith, F. F. Hellier, J. T. Ingram, Ivan H. McCaw, A. C. Roxburgh, E. W. Prosser Thomas.

The following members were elected :—

As Ordinary Members : Dr. W. P. Elford, Coventry ; Dr. B. Portnoy, Manchester ; Dr. David I. Williams, London.

Approval was given to two suggestions from our Australian colleagues. The first concerned the formation of a branch of the association in Western Australia, and the second agreed to an increase in the numbers of members of the Victoria branch.

The scientific meeting was opened by Prof. B. S. Platt, whose paper on "The Effects of Disturbance of Nutrition on the Skin" occupied the rest of the first morning. This was absorbing in its interest and most stimulating, but the discussion had to be postponed until the later part of the following morning, when nine members took part.

After lunch at the Carlton Restaurant the afternoon was devoted to the exhibition of cases. There were 22 of these, including examples of mycosis fungoides, extensive moles with osteomalacia, radiodermatitis, urticaria pigmentosa, multiple superficial epitheliomata, favus, monilethrix, and some for diagnosis. The latter proved particularly interesting, and during the subsequent discussion over 60 contributions were made.

The members were then entertained at a sherry party given by the president at his home in College Gardens. This was followed by dinner at the Grand Central Hotel, where we were particularly pleased to see many members of the Royal Victoria honorary staff, including Professor W. W. D. Thomson and the Dean of the Faculty.

Saturday morning was first devoted to the short papers : Dr. J. Martin Beare,

"Disseminated Lupus Erythematosus"; Dr. W. N. Goldsmith, "A Case of Orf"; Dr. R. E. Bowers, "The Histology of Granuloma Annulare compared with that of the Necrobiotic Nodules of Rheumatoid Arthritis." Finally, Sir Archibald Gray read a paper which had been sent by Dr. Molesworth, "An Early Case of Actinomycosis of the Jaw."

During the afternoon most of the members enjoyed a coach trip to Newcastle, where we were again the guests of the president. During the return journey we were entertained at a cocktail party given by Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Calvert at their home in Ballynahinch. This concluded one of the most enjoyable meetings in the experience of the association.

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## BOOK REVIEWS.

### DISEASES AFFECTING THE VULVA.\*

DR. HUNT is to be congratulated on the third edition of her book. She has a considerable experience of diseases of the vulva, and her presentation of the subject forms a most useful book of reference for specialist and practitioner. The volume is well produced and excellently illustrated. Dr. Hunt believes that most cases of leucoplakia vulvae are in fact lichen sclerosus, and that this affection may give rise to cancer in about 5% of cases. This subject is one which we have come to associate with the author's name, and she puts forward her views and arguments most cogently. The whole section dealing with leucoplakia and kraurosis is very well treated and illustrated, though the author's views may not be acceptable to all dermatologists. It would add to the value of the book if the author more often gave her personal experiences and views upon the subjects under discussion. How often does she see ringworm of the groin and vulva and erythrasma in women?

Dr. Hunt pays great attention to the local condition in pruritus vulvae, but gives scant attention here or elsewhere to the importance of psychological factors in aetiology.

Occasionally the presentation is a little ill-balanced, as in the aetiology of lichen planus, from which a student might accept that this affection was usually due to an organism of the colon-typhoid group.

It is surprising to read that thorium-X is suitable treatment for Bowen's pre-cancerous dermatosis; and some other aspects of treatment, particularly concerning chemotherapy, might be elaborated.

The book is, however, a valuable addition to the medical library, and will be of great assistance to the practitioner and specialist.

J. T. I. -

### LES TRAITEMENTS ACTUELS DES PARASIToses ANIMALES DE LA PEAU.†

IN this monograph Touraine covers a wider field than his title would imply, for he includes useful descriptions of the clinical pictures produced by a variety of animal parasites, and he devotes two chapters to the parasitic worms and the protozoa.

Scabies occupies almost a third of the book. It is interesting to learn that 149,781 cases of scabies were diagnosed in the out-patient department of the Hôpital Saint Louis in 1945; the number of cases has declined since 1946. Touraine summarizes the recent work on the life-history of the acarus, and then gives a full account of the

\* *Diseases Affecting the Vulva*. By ELIZABETH HUNT, B.A., M.D., Ch.B. London: Henry Kimpton, 1948. Third edition, revised. Pp. 211. 19 coloured plates and 36 illustrations. Price 25s.

† *Les traitements actuels des parasitoses animales de la peau*. By A. TOURAINE. Paris: J.-B. Baillière et fils, 1947. Pp. 188.

methods of treatment which have been employed in the past, mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of each, drawing largely on his own experience. The newer methods of treatment are discussed. In the treatment of the adult Touraine favours 3% Gammexane in powdered talc, as it eliminates the necessity for a hot bath, and, at the time of writing, soap and hot water were not always freely available in France. As an alternative he recommends the familiar benzyl benzoate emulsion.

Others chapters deal in similar fashion with pediculosis and with the general use of insecticides and insect repellents. The recent literature on these subjects is adequately considered.

There are brief sections on the biting and stinging parasites. With very few exceptions the parasites mentioned as occurring in France are also found in England. Several species of the Meloidae are found in this country, but they do not appear to have been reported to have caused skin lesions. Several cases were recently reported from America.

The book as a whole contains much useful and interesting information, some of which is otherwise not readily accessible. The aphorisms, with which Touraine concludes each chapter, are excellent, founded as they are on his wide experience and exceptional learning. A good index is provided, but it is unfortunate in a book of this type, in which many authorities are cited, that there should be no bibliography.

A. J. R.

#### THE PRACTICE OF LOCAL ANAESTHESIA.\*

ONLY a few sections of this very complete work on the technique of local anaesthesia are of interest to the dermatologist. The properties of the various drugs in use are discussed, and there are paragraphs on the infiltration of the skin for such operations as biopsy and the removal of cutaneous growths. A brief mention is made of the use of injections of Proctocaine for the treatment of pruritus ani.

A. C. D.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

*To the Editor, 'British Journal of Dermatology and Syphilis.'*

SIR,—In your March number there is a record of a case of "Phyto-photo-dermatitis, due to Parsnips" exhibited by Dr. C. H. Whittle to the Royal Society of Medicine, Section of Dermatology, on 15 May 1947. The description of two outbreaks, which came under my notice, might be of interest.

About 1923 I was asked by the M.O.H. of this district to see some women from a small mining town (West Wallsend) who were engaged at a communal soup kitchen, as volunteers, during the "depression." They met each morning and prepared the vegetables at an ordinary trestle table. All were affected by an irritable dermatitis, mainly confined to the ulnar border of the hands and forearms, where they would rest on the wet table. Patch tests revealed nothing, but when parsnips grown in a different area were substituted for those they had been using the trouble disappeared. There were no leaves on the parsnips. They were using what is described in the trade as "broken bag lots."

The second example more nearly resembles Dr. Whittle's case. It occurred in a military camp in the summer of 1940 among the men engaged in cookhouse fatigue, preparing vegetables. They were dressed simply in shorts and no shirt, and were sitting out in the sun. The parsnips used were from the same source as those described in the aforementioned case, and again there were no leaves. The rash was vesicular, and the vesicle would occur even where water splashed from the tub containing the vegetables and peelings, lighted on the men's skin and dried in the

\* *The Practice of Local Anaesthesia.* By GEORGE BANKOFF, M.D., F.R.F.P.S., F.R.C.S.E. Third edition. London: Staples Press Ltd. Pp. 290. Price 30s. net.

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