

medicine, and have since remained the characteristic features of British obstetrics. Of Harvey's twenty-one successors described in this book, special mention must be made of Edmund Chapman, the first who publicly made known the forceps used by the Chamberlens in "An Essay for the Improvement of Midwifery" (1733); William Smellie (1697-1763), described by Fasbender as "one of the most important obstetricians of all times and all countries"; William Hunter, the author of a magnificent work on the gravid uterus; John Burton (1710-1771), who as author of the "Monasticon Eboracense" was better known as an antiquarian than as an obstetrician, though he served as the original of Sterne's Dr. Slop; John Leake (1729-1792), the founder of the Westminster Lying-in Hospital, and author of important works on puerperal fever, convulsions, and hæmorrhage; and Thomas Denman (1733-1815), the author of "The Introduction to the Practice of Midwifery," which is of value not only for the allusion to the work of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, but also for the first account of induction of premature labour in cases of contracted pelvis, which, as Dr. Spencer points out, became a favourite operation in Great Britain long before it was accepted abroad.

In the second chapter, which is entitled "The Doctor and the Midwives," the author shows that before the forceps became generally known in 1733, the practice of midwifery in Great Britain was mainly in the hands of midwives, and the treatises on the subject were few in number and poor in quality. After the introduction of the forceps, midwifery was taken up by male practitioners, who thereby incurred the violent and scurrilous opposition of the midwives, which did not subside until the end of the eighteenth century.

The third chapter is devoted to an account of puerperal fever, with special reference to the work of Harvey, Gordon, White, and Denman. It is noteworthy, in view of later bacteriological discoveries, that the connexion of erysipelas with the disease, and the conveyance of infection by attendants, were observed by Gordon and Denman, and that Gordon prescribed washing of the attendants as a prophylactic measure. In the final chapter the contributions of British obstetricians during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are reviewed.

Dr. Spencer is to be warmly congratulated on his work, which shows a characteristic blend of fine scholarship and sympathetic estimation of his predecessors, with shrewd criticism and lively humour.

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Our Bookshelf.

An Introduction to the Theory and Use of the Microscope. By Prof. C. R. Marshall and H. D. Griffith. Pp. viii + 90 + 3 plates. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1928.) 3s. 6d. net.

WHEN public interest in the curiosities of science was widespread, some fifty years ago, the possession of a microscope was a social necessity. The instrument to-day is no longer the popular plaything it formerly was. It has become a recognised part of the equipment essential to the progress of science and industry. Only the makers of microscopes will regret their useful restriction to the laboratory and the workshop, where the real function of the instrument can best be fulfilled.

According to the foreword, this rather brief "Introduction to the Theory and Use of the Microscope" has been prepared for the use of "students who require a microscope in their studies," and it is hoped by the authors that it will prove of value "as well to those amateur microscopists who wish to understand the principles upon which microscopy is based." In substance the book is founded on the lectures and practical work on microscopy forming part of the class work of medical physics in the University of Aberdeen.

Students who wish to obtain a working knowledge of this highly important instrument, and have no time for the study of a more elaborate treatise, will find this little book very useful. It provides a large amount of theoretical and practical information of the kind required by such readers in a small space, which might have been extended with advantage. In attempting in a few words to explain to beginners the principles of diffraction and resolution, the authors have assumed a difficult task. Abbe's diffraction theory can scarcely be discussed convincingly on the basis of 'scattering' and 'privileged directions.' Some of the statements made under the restriction of space may mislead the student rather than help him. "Outline pictures," for example, are described on the apparent assumption that rays caught by the lens reach the eye regardless of their obliquity.

At the end of the book there is included a useful chapter containing a selection of the more important fundamental formulæ and the principal physical proofs. There is an excellent index, which should enable the student to find at once the information he may desire. J. W. F.

Naval Electrical Manual, 1928. Vol. 1. By Prof. Cecil L. Fortescue. Published by Authority of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Pp. xiii + 812 + xl. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1928.) 12s. 6d. net.

THE Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have decided that a standard work on the theory of electricity is required for the information and guidance of officers and men of H.M. fleet. For this purpose, therefore, the "Naval Electrical Manual," Vol. 1, 1928, has been prepared by Prof. Fortescue. An examination of the book shows that it begins by giving electric and magnetic laws and formulæ.