BOOK REVIEWS


This book is an account of what occurred a hundred or more years ago in the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons during the hot weather in India. What began as a petty squabble amongst the officers resulted in the death of the Regimental Sergeant Major and in the Court Martial of several of the principals including the Commanding Officer Lt.-Col. Thomas Crawley.

Mr. Hawkey traces the story from its start in India to its end in England and does so with the utmost skill and lucidity. He has allowed the chief actors to speak in their own words wherever possible and his use of contemporary reports, Courts of Inquiry and Courts Martial could not be improved upon and is a model of how such sources should be handled. The result of this admirable use of contemporary sources is that all the characters come alive and the whole unhappy tale develops before one's eyes with the inevitability of Greek tragedy.

This is an important social document revealing as it does the conditions and standards in a "bad" regiment a 100 years ago. Our Corps readers will find the death of Regimental Sergeant Major John Lilley from heat exhaustion and the parts played by the Regimental Surgeons—Turnbull and Bennett—of particular interest.

Quite apart from his skill as a narrator Mr. Hawkey is sober and factual in his presentation and this very restraint adds greatly to the impact which the story makes on the reader; in his summing up at the end few readers will disagree with the author's shrewd judgements.

The book is very well produced and printed and represents excellent value.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Hawkey's pen will produce more Service trials and tragedies for us but in the meantime we would recommend "Last Post" most strongly to our readers as it is in a class of its own and deserving of every success.

It is worth noting that we read this book twice—once on publication and again for this review and on each occasion we read it from cover to cover at one go as we were quite unable to put it down.

A. MacLENNAN


Surgeon in Nepal by Major Peter Pitt, F.R.C.S. ex R.A.M.C. is a well written book, skillfully and authentically illustrated. Written for a public that is rapidly learning more about medical matters it will surely have some success.

The description of disease and injury are clear and understandable to the non-medical reader. The book gives a fair picture of the hard life lived by the mountain folk of Nepal, of the value they place upon life, their philosophy, and the degree of trust they place upon their own "medicine men" and the more enlightened doctors from beyond the borders of their country.

Major Pitt has taken trouble to learn of local customs and beliefs and to learn the minimum requirements of the local language. He has certainly given a guide to any who may follow him to the British Military Hospital, Dharan and his book may well encourage recruitment. It was his great good fortune to be sent to Nepal and he has made the most of it.

It is a pity, however, that he does not make it clear that his appointment was to care for the recruits, soldiers, and pensioners of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the staff of the cantonment of Dharan, not the local inhabitants. This book gives little credit for his undoubted achievements to those who helped him. His Commanding Officer, his anaesthetist, and his operating theatre staff remain nameless. Even the Royal Army Medical Corps, by whom he was directed to Nepal and whom he represented, is barely mentioned.

There were others there before and after him in the same appointment. There are also several surgeons in civilian capacities, of different nationalities, working under more difficult circumstances, scattered throughout that enchanting country. They too deserve a mention.

This is a book that should be read in its true perspective and to make it so it would perhaps have given its author more credit if it had been called "A Surgeon in Nepal."

R. S. HUNT


The title of this book mislead me as I had expected to read a highly coloured account of the repulse of the 36th Texas Division in the Rapido River in 1944. In the event I was pleasantly surprised as the author gives his account with clarity, restraint and understanding. What emerges clearly from the author's analysis is that the prime causes for the Division's failure were (a) The Divisional Commander's humanity and concern for his men which resulted in a lack of drive and (b) the lack of confidence within the Division which meant that they were half-way to failure before the action began. This is a most valuable book which especially illustrates the importance of good leadership and morale.

A. MacLENNAN


The diagnosis and management of injuries is described not in narrative but in clear well annotated diagrams and in a few notes. The book slips easily into a coat pocket and is hinged to lie flat when open.
Professor Huckstep has written this book as a guide and quick reference for Casualty Officers, House Surgeons, and Registrars. Certainly it is an excellent aide-memoire which one should either purchase or perhaps produce for oneself. There is much to be said for having such a statement of policy, not let it be said an instruction, in every casualty department.

R. M. C. RAN


This book is divided into three sections.
Part I covers general principles of radiography and specialised techniques including tomography, multiple radiography, subtraction, ultrasonics, and others. Part II covers general radiography.
Part III covers special examinations grouped mainly according to systems, for example, urinary tract.

The text is generally clear and easy to read, the diagrams, although few, are clear and concise. The reproduction of radiographs is also of good quality.

The author states, in her introduction, that the book is designed as a text book for student radiographers and a work of reference for qualified staff in the department. As regards its use as a text book, the first two parts do not contain enough information, with a few notable exceptions, to enable me to recommend this book to students. I feel that too much information is contained in too small a space and in several cases important information such as radiographic centering points is quoted briefly as "to the centre of the film" rather than in the more precise anatomical terms required by examiners.

Very much the same comments limit its use as a departmental reference book, as the requirement here is for details of non-routine examinations rather than day to day techniques.

However, I would thoroughly recommend this book, both to students and others, purely for the information contained in the third part on special examinations. Again the information is concise, but not too much so, and the layout of the sections is ideal for examination purposes. The comprehensive lists of instruments at the end of each technique, the timing and number of films etc. help to make this section worthy of study by more senior radiographers in working departments, especially in view of the inclusion in this part of details of several new techniques.

R. W. JOYNER


Illustrated Physiology is a pictorial study of human physiology and has already proved to be popular with a wide range of students. The illustrations are clear and the main points summarised on the same page. One criticism of the book is that one or two diagrams lose their impact because of the amount of printed material.

This edition, the second, has been brought up-to-date and includes new pages on the hypothesis of counter-current urine formation and maintenance of blood volume. It may be recommended to R.A.M.C. students of physiology and deserves a place in hospital and para-medical libraries.

H. ATKINSON


The appearance of the second edition of this book is indicative of the value it has for students of nursing and allied subjects, particularly when used as it should be in conjunction with the illustrated book.

Dr. McNaught provides in clear concise terms sound basic information with regard to human physiology, a subject so necessary for the modern students of nursing to enable them to appreciate the significance of why they are doing what they are doing for their patients.

The text is well laid out, system by system, to emphasise the important facts, and the book itself is a convenient size for pocket or hand, and most reasonably priced. A good buy for any School of Nursing Library.

A. K. M. WISDOM


The fifth edition of this textbook maintains the principles of acting as an introduction to Nursing and First Aid to first year nurses. It does however appear to dwell heavily on outmoded concepts and procedures.

The section on Weights and Measures contains lengthy tables of conversion from Imperial to Metric which are adequately covered in older textbooks for the benefit of the very few hospitals which still use them. The section on hospital furniture shows only examples of older equipment which, although widely used, is rapidly being replaced by lighter and more functional equipment. The section on First Aid is concise and brief with clear diagrams lending itself to the needs of a junior student nurse.

The textbook does not recommend itself to the nurse, thumbing through its pages in a school library owing to its poor quality paper and rather unimaginative diagrams. There are too few good points for me to recommend this book to my students.

G. A. MANNING