LETTER TO THE EDITOR

RABIES

SIR—Her Majesty’s Government is doing everything in its power to alert the British nation to the imminent danger of a rabies invasion. Many experts believe that it is not a question of if but rather when will rabies hit the United Kingdom.

Our hopes that all personnel in the Defence Forces will be reminded continually of the awesome threat posed by rabies against this country. In the past much blame was laid to our door, rightly or wrongly, because it was assumed that the re-introduction of rabies into this country, after its eradication in 1902, was due to smuggled dog(s) by returning servicemen after the 1914-1918 War; and more recently members of the armed forces figured prominently amongst those found importing animals ‘illegally’ on returning from abroad.

Since I qualified in 1946, that is over 30 years ago, there have been only 10 cases of rabies in this country—all contracted abroad, but this satisfactory state of affairs has not been always so, and it is very much worth while reminding ourselves, especially those of us serving in the medical departments of the defence forces, that 100 years ago in London there were 6 deaths from rabies in one year alone; namely in 1875, and again 6 deaths in 1876, and moreover by the end of July 1877 there were already nine deaths reported from hydrophobia.

What was it Santayana said? “Those that cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it!”

I am etc.,

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BOOK REVIEWS


This new edition of one of our most famous medical textbooks has seen considerable changes since the earlier edition of 1971. Many chapters have been re-written, a lot of new information has been added. Although the death of Mr. McNeill Love in 1974 removes the last of the original authors there is no doubt that Professors Harding Raines and David Ritchie have continued the revision in the same style as the original authors.

In a book of this size there are bound to be minor criticisms, because the book is so good that it can be used by students and by candidates for final Fellowship. The more one goes into this book, the more one realises the tremendous amount of information that has been collected.

I feel that with the present situation, the useful snippets of information about bullet wounds and blast injury should be collected into a separate small section and I understand this is planned.

There is a tremendous number of excellent photographs and line drawings which complement the text and there is no doubt in my mind that the cost of this book at £10.00 is probably the best buy, certainly in surgical textbooks, available on the market today. It can be thoroughly recommended as the standard textbook in surgery.

M. S. OWEN-SMITH


The fact that a second edition of this Atlas has been required speaks well for its usefulness as a visual aid in teaching parasitology and for this purpose it is to be thoroughly recommended. The quality