

holtz's theory of audition based on the clinical observation of cases of meningitis affecting the labyrinth.

Chapter 8, "Auditory troubles in tabes," is another important chapter. It is well to remember here that chronic dry catarrh is frequently present in locomotor ataxy, and has no doubt often been mistaken for true nerve deafness. The possibility of the presence of an anatomical substratum to explain the occurrence of hallucinations of hearing in these cases is wisely emphasised. From the association of sensory and trophic lesions of the face with chronic dry aural catarrh in tabes one is led to conclude that the aural lesions are due to some affection of the fifth nerve; Gellé and Laborde's researches are of great interest in this relation.

In Chapter 10 there is a discussion of the question of a neuro-paralytic otitis media, analogous to neuro-paralytic keratitis, and arising like it from some lesion of the fifth nerve.

In the chapter on neurosis we find an account of the auditory troubles in hysteria, epilepsy, megrim, &c.

Altogether Dr. Collet's little book is a useful addition to that valuable series of monographs, the 'Encyclopédie scientifique des aide-mémoire.'

La Responsabilité médicale ; Secret médical, Déclarations de Naissance ; Inhumations ; Expertises médico-légales.
Par P. BROUARDEL. Paris : Librairie J. B. Baillière et fils, 1898. Pp. 456. Pr. 9 fr.

Professor Brouardel has done well to publish this collection of lectures on medical jurisprudence to the Paris students in book form. The delicate question of medical responsibility, considered from the point of view of French law and opinion, is handled in a fascinating manner by an eminent authority, and cannot fail to be interesting to medical men, whatever may be their nationality, and whatever may be their varying legal responsibilities on this subject.

With the evolution of society the medical man's duties become more onerous, and the difficulties of practice increase; and it is difficult to realise, in reading Professor Brouardel's introductory remarks concerning the antagonism between public opinion and medical opinion, the abuse of hospitals and medical aid societies, the overcrowding of the medical profession, with its attendant evils of advertising, touting,

“dichotomy,” &c., that his observations do not extend beyond the limits of his own country. In 1876, whereas only one or two cases a year, involving the responsibility of the medical man, were dealt with by the French courts, at the present time there are eight or ten per month.

The most important question discussed in these pages is the professional secret in its relations to criminal and civil actions, to life insurance, marriage, &c. The theory which tradition and law have imposed in France, but which is far from being universally accepted, is practically that the medical secret is inviolable. The legislator there has considered that the interest of the health of a man, the social interest in the professional secret being kept, is so great as to place it even above the interest of justice.

The secret imposed upon the medical man is not a privilege; it is a duty imposed upon him in the public interest, and for the violation of which a severe penalty is dealt; whether there be intention to do harm or not,—nay, whether the result be even for the patient’s welfare. For example, a woman who has contracted syphilis from her husband, sues him for separation. Dr. Fournier, who had treated her, is called as a witness, and by her released of his secret. Dr. Fournier refuses to give evidence on the point, and his resolution is firmly upheld by the court.

Before the courts the received formula is—“I consider as confidential the relations which led to my knowledge of the facts upon which I am examined, and I therefore cannot answer.”

That difficulties frequently occur, a perusal of Dr. Brouardel’s work amply shows, as in the case of medical aid societies, clubs, &c.; moreover, as regards hospital patients, there is practically no such thing as the professional secret. As regards the bulletins which are published when distinguished or notorious personages are ill, there are words of wisdom to be found in the pages of this book which might well be pondered over by the profession in this country.

“In England there is no medical secret,” says Dr. Brouardel, which is, of course, an exaggeration, and the reasons he gives to explain this on p. 131 are simply ridiculous, such as—“In England there is not between doctor and patient the same intimacy as is found in France,” &c.; “their relations are purely commercial,” &c.

Compared with the condition of affairs with us, the relations of medical men to life insurance companies are interesting.

In France no certificate is given by the candidate's medical attendant (whatever may be the state of the candidate's health), and no death certificate, to the company.

The remarks on "declaration of birth" are very interesting. This function often falls to the lot of the doctor to perform, as, for instance, with illegitimate children. In Paris, where nearly a third of the total number of births are illegitimate (*e. g.* 379 in 1157 between February 6th and 12th), this adds to the practitioner's duties, and to his responsibility; for the declaration must take place without revealing the professional secret; this usually means concealing the name of the mother, her address, &c. If the child is killed by its mother matters are still further complicated; for the infanticide must not be revealed by the medical attendant, but the birth must be declared.

Burial is another of those questions which are dealt with very differently in France compared with England; and while the system of having medical men to "verify" deaths, as in Paris, may be in some respects a good one, the condition of affairs in country places is very unsatisfactory; for there, not unfrequently, "people are buried who have never been seen by the doctor, neither during their last illness nor after their death."

Writing a death certificate would be, on the part of the medical attendant, revealing the professional secret; consequently the "verifier" is supposed not only to report the fact of death having taken place, but by looking at the body and hearing the particulars of the last illness from friends, &c., he is supposed to decide that death has taken place from natural causes—a risky performance, it appears to us.

Dr. Brouardel's lectures on medico-legal experts are, as one would expect, excellent. The duties, training, appointment of these experts in France constitute a subject of paramount interest. In civil matters there are usually three experts; in criminal questions only one expert is appointed by the court, a position of great responsibility for any medical man to hold, and requiring important qualifications. Many of us are conscious of the objections which may be raised to the procedure common in this country—the presence of an expert on each side—*i. e.* for the prosecution and the defence. "In England," says Brouardel, "I can affirm that this method [*i. e.* an expert on each side] has given the worst results. The experts become in truth counsels, each pleading for his client, one for the prosecution, the other for the defence."

Finally, Professor Brouardel deals with the question of medical certificates,—certificates of complaisance, imprudent certificates, fraudulent certificates, &c.

The appendix contains a number of interesting letters written to the author by medical men in difficulties as regards medical responsibility, and test cases, &c. It would have been interesting to learn the solutions given by him to the various problems raised in these communications.

We have only referred to the matter with which Professor Brouardel deals in these lectures; it requires a perusal of his book to appreciate the lucid and fascinating style in which the author communicates his views, relieved here and there with such shrewd though perhaps cynical observations as the following:—"Contrasted with man, woman lies with perfection;" "Those who deal with the dead take to drink;" "The medico-legal expert must close his ears and open his eyes," &c.; and finally, the legal taunt to the medical profession, "Get a medical certificate to this or that effect; you will always find a doctor who will give it you."

L'Innervation du Corps thyroïde. Par le Dr. EUGÈNE BRIAN.
Libraire J. Baillière et fils, Paris, 1898.

The undoubtedly important place which the thyroid gland occupies in the animal economy renders any careful study of it worthy of consideration, and in the publication of his paper on the innervation of the thyroid the author is to be congratulated on the completion of a long and painstaking investigation, which is none the less valuable because it mainly corroborates the work of other observers. The most important sections are concerned partly with the origin and disposition of the thyroïdal nerves, and partly with their function.

I. *Anatomical Results.*—(1) The main nerve-supply of the thyroid is derived from the cervical sympathetic branches being given off at various levels, in man chiefly from the second cardiac nerve and from the middle cervical ganglion. The branches form, especially round the inferior thyroid artery, periarterial plexuses, which it is easy to demonstrate in the fœtus by ordinary dissection. A subsidiary supply is constantly derived from the recurrent and inferior laryngeal nerves, each of which sends two or three filaments to the gland. No thyroïdal branches from the glosso-pharyngeal