

Review of Books

In mammals the semicircular canals reach a high standard of development, though far short of that in fishes and birds.

The evolution of the labyrinth, which is discussed at much greater length than it is possible to indicate in this review, is illustrated by figures taken from the author's *The Labyrinth of Animals*.

In pathology, deaf-mutism and otosclerosis are chosen as examples of inherited defects, the first due to a primary structural defect and the second due to a primary vasomotor defect. An elaborate comparison is drawn between the two conditions to illustrate this, the one condition being present at birth and the other appearing later in life after the organ has exercised its function normally for years.

The whole essay is based upon the hypothesis that the variations which result in evolution are Induced Variations caused by the response to injury and repair of the tissues. This hypothesis is very attractive and becomes more and more so as the reader follows the argument. Although it may contravene some of the canons of zoology it may nevertheless be true. If so, it provides a middle way between the straight and narrow path of mutation and Weismannism on the one hand and, on the other, the broad and easy way of evolution by the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

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LIONEL COLLEDGE.

Diseases of the Ear, Throat and Nose. By J. DOUGLAS MCLAGGAN.
Lewis's General Practice Series. 15s.

This moderate-sized book of 328 pages is designed for the "overworked practitioner and harassed student" in the words of the preface; it fulfils its purpose. The author has supplied a large store of information in an eminently readable form; there are nine excellent reproductions of X-rays by Dr. Graham Hodgson and a large number of illustrations, many of them original and designed to aid the appreciation of anatomical and pathological conditions.

The Ear section is the longest and for the most part is very good; the description of acute and chronic otitis media is clear and the indications for operation very helpful. Special praise is due to the author's description of five types of chronic suppurative otitis media and his illustrative diagrams will be a pleasure to students and an example to teachers. There are several other original diagrams.

There are, however, some statements that strike the reader as scarcely sound: such as for instance that inflation of the Eustachian tube in exudative otitis media is unwise as it may carry infection to the middle ear and precipitate an acute otitis media; a statement not borne out by experience. For lateral sinus thrombosis, ligation of the internal jugular vein is advocated in every case; surely too

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sweeping a procedure in view of much recent experience, especially in the Scandinavian clinics.

In the treatment of meningitis it is suggested that the dura mater may be incised and if need be intrathecal lavage practised ; it is doubtful if this treatment should be carried out now, in face of the good results of continuous lumbar puncture.

Omissions are few, but the author might have allowed the use of the electric auriscope, so widely used by students and practitioners to see the changes in the tympanic membrane which he describes so well.

There is no collected table of the causes of earache, a matter of the greatest importance to practitioners ; nor are the common ear symptoms of aviators noted.

There is a good description of the hearing tests, almost too good, and it would have in no way detracted from the value of this section if the use of whispered words and of the watch had been omitted.

The throat section is admirable and the perennial tonsil question is dealt with in the most balanced way and ought to go far to save many an operation.

Diseases of the larynx are set out very clearly : also their treatment. The author prefers laryngofissure for epithelioma of the vocal cords and is averse to the insertion of radium needles through a thyroid window except for advanced cases, a view which will not be universally accepted. The description of the laryngeal and pharyngeal paralyses is at a high level ; so is that of the anatomy and diseases of the œsophagus.

There is a short but adequate chapter on the trachea and bronchi.

The section on the nose and sinuses is well up to standard ; it is very fully illustrated by excellent diagrams and X-rays and makes a difficult subject seem easy ; the author impresses restraint in the matter of operation, though he might have been more emphatic about removal of the inferior turbinate.

This is a book that should prove popular with students.

W. M. MOLLISON.