BOOK REVIEWS

Queen Square and the National Hospital 1860-1960. Foreword by Sir Ernest Gowers. (Pp. x + 112; 57 figures. 30s.) London: Edward Arnold. 1960.

"Queen Square", as we all call the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, has played a remarkable role in the development of British Medicine. Special centres are required for exploring new fields, and for the past century Queen Square has played a leading part in this way and has contributed largely to the advancement of neurology throughout the world.

This tastefully prepared volume will be valued greatly by all who appreciate the importance of research on the nervous system. The excellent collection of portraits and illustrations is specially welcome and most appropriate for the centenary celebrations.

Queen Square continues to provide unique facilities for teaching and for treating the sick, but the facilities for research are now inadequate and require great expansion. Study of the nervous system is assuming enormous importance in the modern world, and a large part of the British contribution to this work should certainly be made in Queen Square. This is an urgent problem, the solution of which has been somewhat complicated by the advent of the National Health Service. However, a solution must be found, and quickly.

Surgery in World War II: Neurosurgery, Volume I. Editor-in-Chief: John Boyd Coates; Editors for Neurosurgery, R. Glen Spurling and Barnes Woodhall, assisted by Elizabeth M. McFetridge. (Pp. xix + 466; 130 figures. \$5.00.) Washington: United States Army Medical Service. 1958.

This book is the first of two volumes on neurosurgery prepared by the medical department of the United States Army as part of the official history of World War II. This first volume deals with head injuries and a second volume is due shortly on injuries of the spinal cord and of the peripheral nerves. This book was planned and written in 1946 and although publication has been delayed until now for various reasons, little has been lost. The articles, written by a distinguished list of contributors, are as fresh and as accurate today as they were then. That they were written soon after the heat of battle with the problems still fresh in the minds of the authors is obvious from the text, and in some ways added point has been given by inviting attention after this interval.

Neurosurgery in the American Army began in 1942 with the appointment of Glen Spurling to direct the first neurosurgical service and the invitation to bring his own instruments; two years later 19 main centres in the

United States alone and staffs in the various operational theatres overseas could be described. Such was the expansion, and its administrative problems are here fully and frankly set out, the disappointments as well as the successes. Civilian neurosurgery at the early period of the war was unprepared to meet such a demand for specialized medical staff. The Army was therefore forced to develop a short training programme in neurosurgery of six months or so for the young general surgeon. The lack of neurologists to work with the neurosurgeons was also keenly felt. The section in this book dealing with specialist training is important for those responsible for teaching and stresses the need to include the essentials of the specialist subjects in postgraduate general medical and surgical training.

In the early years the Army neurosurgeons were attached to evacuation hospitals and it was not until 1944 that the U.S. Army developed neurosurgical centres as such in the overseas theatres. At the end of hostilities Spurling concluded that for the future neurosurgical teams should not be assigned to evacuation hospitals but be essentially mobile and attached to hospitals for limited periods as the necessity arose. It was felt that had this been possible, the same work could have been done and more effectively with half the neurosurgical personnel employed. Such reflections are valuable for the future, for, despite the growth of civilian neurosurgery since the war, the demands on the civilian side will be as great as on the military should a future war develop and it will be essential to use highly specialized personnel economically and to the best advantage.

The latter part of this volume is devoted to clinical problems of head injuries. There is an authoritative chapter by Donald Matson on the management of missile head wounds, and other articles, such as those on post-traumatic epilepsy by Earl Walker and blast concussion by Fritz Cramer, which reviews very fully the knowledge on this subject, testify to the high quality of the contributions. The book particularly in this section, is well illustrated and beautifully produced.

Many of the American surgeons came to Britain during the war and visited our neurological and neurosurgical centres. They joined our discussions and graceful tribute is paid here to the value of these contacts. Many new friendships were made and others cemented. A homely note is struck where Air Vice Marshal C. P. Symonds is recorded as having served in the R.A.M.C.

The initial period of many military campaigns has seen a painful relearning of the lessons of the past. This frank account of neurosurgery setting out so fully the administrative problems should allow the planners of the future to go ahead more rapidly and more surely should that unhappy need arise.

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