DELTAIC FORMATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE HYDROGRAPHIC PROCESSES OF THE GANGES AND THE BRAHMAPUTRA.—By C. Strickland, M.A., M.D. 1940. Longmans, Green and Company, Limited (17, Chittaranjan Avenue), Calcutta. Pp. xiii plus 157. Illustrated

THE day is long past when the physician was expected to have a deep knowledge of all scientific subjects and was prepared to write books or papers on such diverse subjects as ornithology and geology. Is this because, as a profession, we are being made of poorer stuff? Or is it that our estimate of the word *deep* has undergone a profound change, and that a hundred years ago scientific knowledge was so shallow that anyone who scratched the surface could claim special knowledge, whereas to-day the physician has so much to learn about his own subject that he cannot hope to go beyond this? We sincerely trust that our second explanation is the true one, but no one who allows himself to ponder over these matters can fail to feel some slight misgiving at the present trend towards extreme specialization in scientific knowledge. It is therefore with very great pleasure that we have received a book by a doctor, recently retired from a professorship in a medical institution, on a subject that is essentially a geological one.

There is, of course, a link between Professor Strickland's specialty, medical entomology, and the subject of his book, deltaic formation; this is provided mainly by that arthropod-enemy no. 1, the mosquito, and it was during his expeditions into this enemy's domains that the author made most of the observations on which this book is based.

It would be wrong to say that hitherto the subject has been a neglected one, for long before child psychology was taken up seriously by the medical profession, geologists in India were doing far more than merely scratching their heads over their problem children, the wayward rivers of the Indo-Gangetic plain, who will never make up their minds which way they want to go and who, when you build them nice bridges to pass under, insist on going round them, but little has been written on delta formation, certainly very little that the ordinary educated man can understand. No one who has any interest in this subject, direct or indirect, can fail to appreciate this little book. Each step is

clearly explained, the whole story is unravelled before the readers' eyes in Dr. Strickland's pleasant style, and where any obscurity might exist this is clarified by the aid of simple diagrams. The book also contains a number of interesting and relevant photographs.

As a mild criticism we might add that the author has a style which though pleasing, as a whole, exhibits a tendency towards obscure constructions and archaic forms. Also, the geologist may complain about some of his terminology, but to the average reader this will be the contrary to a defect.

Above we deplored the extreme tendency to specialization in science, but there are signs that the tide is turning and schools of hygiene include lectures on geology in their programmes; a book on such a subject as the physical condition and the formation of deltas, especially relating to a country like Bengal, where the subject is discussed daily by politicians, sanitarians, economists, and the man in the street, in relation to the problems of the province, is not only the natural outcome of this trend of interest, but should be welcomed by people of all classes.

AIDS TO ANATOMY (POCKET ANATOMY).—By Professor E. P. Stibbe, F.R.C.S. Tenth Edition. 1940. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London. Pp. vii plus 369, with 50 illustrations. Price, 5s.

IT is rather difficult to assess the value of 'Pocket Anatomy' in these days when the achievement of success in learning anatomy no longer lies in the mastery of the details. The teaching now is directed—and more profitably so—towards its bearings on clinical studies. But, nevertheless, a synopsis of such relevant anatomical facts appears to have its field as an aid to the students in their attempts to control the multitude of facts studied from voluminous texts. To render real service, such books must cease to be merely a narrative of bare facts without including clinical relationships.

Professor Stibbe has endeavoured, by way of improvement upon the previous editions, to incorporate in its limited scope, matters having clinical significance. The present volume is, therefore, likely to be much more serviceable than those of the past.

There are one or two mistakes, e.g., in the 'note' on page 74 where 'Hallucis' should be 'Pollicis'.

S. C. S.

Abstracts from Reports

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CURATOR OF THE LABORATORY FOR THE YEAR 1939

Statistics of anti-rabies treatment.—A ninth analytical review by the superintendent of the results of anti-rabies treatment at the Pasteur Institutes of the world, as deduced from statistics submitted to the League of Nations, is in the press. The figures cover a two-yearly period, and relate to the years 1936 and 1937, the number of persons treated being 304,525. Of these 797 (0.26 per cent) contracted the disease in spite of treatment. In attempting to assess the relative efficacies of the various methods of treatment employed, recourse has been had to the whole statistics dealt with in the nine successive reviews. The number of persons treated during this period was 1,062,707, of whom 3,540 (or 0.33 per cent) contracted rabies. There seems little to choose between the dried cord, dilution, killed phenol (carbolized), live phenol, Fermi, heated, and killed ether methods of treatment as regards their immunizing properties, whilst a mixed method (dilutions, plus in severe cases the live ether vaccine of Alivisatos) is apparently associated with a reduction of mortality which does not exceed 45 per cent, and may be as low as 3 per cent. On the other hand, the risk

of accident as the result of treatment in the case of treatment by killed vaccines is less than 1 in 7,000, whereas in the case of those treated by living vaccines it is greater than 1 in 3,500.

Statistics of treatment in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have for various reasons been separately dealt with. The number of persons treated during the period 1929–1934 is 380,090, of whom 612 (0.16 per cent) died of rabies. The conclusions regarding the efficacies of the different methods of treatment employed are in general accordance with those found in the main report.

Trichomonas and thrush vaginitis.—This work showed that the commonest cause of leucorrhœa in pregnancy is an infection with *Trichomonas vaginalis*, 37.5 per cent. Next in importance is an infection with the thrush fungus *Oidium albicans*, 24.5 per cent. In a few cases both parasites were present. Both these parasites have been studied in detail and the various micro-organisms associated with them in the vagina have been noted. The latter possibly play some part in influencing the course of confinement and the puerperium. It is certain that the thrush fungus in the vaginal secretion of pregnant women may communicate infection to their infants and thus give rise, in certain circumstances, to serious mortality among them. The true cause of the mortality is often overlooked