

complications still appears to be closer related to blood glucose control than to any aspect of genetic make-up yet identified.

A useful description of genetic syndromes associated with diabetes interfaces with the second, briefer, part of the book, devoted to non-insulin dependent diabetes. Epidemiology, twin studies, obesity and 'MODY' (now 'NIDDM') are reviewed, and there is a chapter on the vexed question of the chlorpropamide-alcohol flush. The final chapter, a review of the 'thrifty genotype' hypothesis brings together much of the material presented in the previous chapters.

This book is largely for the specialist, but almost half of it is easily comprehensible to the general physician, and should be mandatory reading for those working in diabetic clinics.

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By Candlelight: The Life of Dr Arthur Hill Hassall (1817-1894). Ernest A Gray

pp 186 £10.95 London: Robert Hale 1983

Every medical student, when studying the histology of the thymus, learns to recognize, among the glandular follicles of the medulla, those special large cells containing several granular nuclei, each surrounded by one or more concentrically arranged epithelioid cells - the corpuscles of Hassall.

What do we know of Hassall? It is this question which Dr Ernest Gray has set out to answer, and in this pleasantly written and well researched biography he shines a torch-light into the Victorian gloom (otherwise barely lit 'by candlelight') and reveals Arthur Hill Hassall as not merely a physician to be remembered for his eponymous thymic corpuscles but also a remarkable figure who excelled in many varied spheres.

Born in Teddington, the son of a doctor, Hassall was apprenticed to his uncle, Sir James Murray, a Dublin physician. He became fascinated by the minute flora and fauna revealed in the early days of the microscope and, while still a student in Dublin, he completed the pioneer biological study, 'A Catalogue of Irish Zoo-phytes' (1841). Following qualification, he settled in general practice in Notting Hill where, despite poor health (he had contracted pulmonary tuberculosis), he continued his microscopic studies which culminated in the classic work, 'A History of British Freshwater Algae' (1845). His 'The Microscopic Anatomy of the Human Body' (1849) was the first English textbook on the subject and it was in this work that he describes the thymic corpuscles which bear his name.

Hassall also concerned himself with the appalling sanitary conditions of Victorian

London. In the cholera epidemic of 1854, he observed vibrios in the rice-water stools of those affected but he did not possess the technique to demonstrate the vibrio to be the cause of cholera, which Koch succeeded in doing 29 years later. It was largely the efforts of Hassall (in collaboration with that other medicosocial reformer, Thomas Wakley) which eventually provided a clean water supply for Londoners, as well as parliamentary action to ensure purity of all food and drink.

Later, he was appointed to the Royal Free Hospital, where he eventually became senior physician, and he transferred his practice to Wimpole Street. In 1866 his phthisis progressed and he decided to move to the Isle of Wight, where in 1868 he founded a tuberculosis sanatorium, The Royal National Hospital at Ventnor. From 1878, however, he spent most of his time in Switzerland and Italy and he died at San Remo aged 77.

His many remarkable achievements single out Hassall as one of the great physician-scientists of the 19th century - as a microscopist he made many important discoveries in the fields of botany and human histology; as a sanitary reformer his efforts helped to achieve London's pure water supply and safe food; and as a physician he was one of the first in England to develop the sanatorium treatment of tuberculosis.

Dr Ernest Gray has rendered a great service in producing this fine portrait, warts and all, of a Great Victorian whose achievements in many fields have until now not been sufficiently recognized. This book will be read and enjoyed by all who are interested in the medical and social history of the Victorian era.

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Manual of Burn Therapeutics:

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Roger E Salisbury *et al.* (ed) pp 311 US\$16.95
Boston: Little, Brown & Co 1983

This clearly printed spiral-bound manual from the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Centre 'describes in an organised fashion the way in which one burn centre team cares for patients'. The first one-third of the book is a clear and sensible account of the burn injury and its management, with tables and protocols. The only important transatlantic difference in practice is that a colloid solution would be the plasma volume replacement fluid of choice most commonly used in this country. There is an extensive chapter of nursing protocols for every conceivable procedure. Although written in nursing jargon, the immense detail gives a fascinating picture of one unit's