Graphic methods in heart disease

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GRAPHIC METHODS IN HEART DISEASE
OXFORD MEDICAL PUBLICATIONS

GRAPHIC METHODS IN HEART DISEASE

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LONDON

HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

HODDER & STOUGHTON
WARWICK HOUSE, E.C.

1909
PREFACE

Graphic methods of investigating the disorders and diseases of the heart have opened up numerous avenues of research, and it is now generally recognised that valuable information is obtained by such means, concerning diagnosis, prognosis and treatment.

The value of sphygmographic tracings is slight in the absence of simultaneous records from the apex beat, jugular pulse or the liver, and all who confine themselves to records of the radial pulse very soon realise the limitations and comparative barrenness of this field of investigation.

It is very different, however, when combined records are taken: the vagaries of the heart are then full of meaning and interest; they can be explained satisfactorily and their full import comprehended. An arrhythmia which was formerly viewed with vague distrust and misgiving is recognised as simple and harmless, while other variations from the normal, slight though they may be, are recognised as ominous and of moment.

As difficulties are sure to be encountered by all
who attempt to obtain graphic records, difficulties not only in the recording of the actual pulsations but also in the analysis and interpretation of the tracings, I have written this book that it may serve as an introduction and a guide to those who wish to follow this line of clinical investigation.

Beginners are apt to be disheartened by the difficulties they experience in their first attempts, but manipulative skill is soon acquired, and good results obtained with ease and rapidity from all except a small percentage of patients.

I have not described the ordinary methods of clinical examination, inspection, palpation, percussion and auscultation, since they are fully and adequately treated in many excellent works: while Dr. Oliver's handbook (Studies in Blood Pressure) gives a satisfactory account of the accurate estimation of variations in blood pressure and the inferences which may be drawn from such variations.

The number of illustrations is large, and I look upon these records as perhaps the most valuable portion of the book. I have given a representative series, so that readers may find examples of all the more common variations from the normal rhythm.

Most of the records are my own, but I have not hesitated to avail myself of the kindness of my friends in order to supplement and complete the series. In the interpretation and description of the records
I have not done more than give that explanation which appeared to me the most reasonable. It would have been inadvisable to overload a small handbook with controversial theories.

My indebtedness is great to my colleagues at the Royal Infirmary for their invariable kindness and courtesy in permitting me to investigate the cases under their care; also to Dr. Arthur Keith, whose writings on the anatomy of the heart I have used freely; and, above all, to Dr. James Mackenzie, at whose suggestion I began this book. His brilliant work and kindly sympathy have been a constant stimulus, and I feel that any value which this contribution to the literature may possess is due in a large measure to him.

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John Hay.
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