BOOK REVIEWS


Dr. Paul has admirably combined his long experience as a medical officer of health and lecturer in public health in the production of a first-class work. Ease of presentation and attention to detail are combined by an obvious love for, and understanding of, his subject. Together they produce a thoroughly absorbing text-book suitable alike for student, general practitioner, physician and medical officer of health.

The book is divided into eight sections. The first deals with the factors affecting the host-parasitic relationship and the behaviour of epidemic disease in general, while the second, equally short, is a review of the historical background to the communicable diseases of the present day. The following five sections are devoted to the common infectious fevers; the ‘epidemic scourges’ (smallpox, chickenpox, tuberculosis, venereal disease, cancer); the diseases associated with food and water; the neuro-tropic infections; and the infections borne by insects. The final section describes the general measures of control of disease. Each individual disease is discussed with the same thoroughness with which the entire epidemiological field has been covered: history, bacteriology, aetiology, clinical features, differential diagnosis, spread and therapy are all included in detail in a pleasing format and not as incidentals to the measures of control which are given in full.

This book is no personal credo. The author has read widely, and each chapter contains abundant references to the original papers he has consulted and suggestions as to further reading are given on all the important points. Though Dr. Paul advances his own views strongly, and some are on matters of considerable debate, these are the results of careful study of the many divergent and conflicting schools of thought, including in every case the most modern. A mass of statistical information is included, but unobtrusively so, and the main points of control of the individual disease are illustrated by detailed references to recent outbreaks.

As a text-book for students of public health this work must rank high, but as a book of reference it should appeal to the medical profession in general.


This book summarizes the author’s experience of scoliosis in under 300 pages and gives the reader an intelligible survey of one of the most difficult conditions confronting the paediatrician and the orthopaedic surgeon. Dr. Kleinberg writes from the orthodox American standpoint and maintains a reasoned optimism without in any way baulking age-old problems. He believes that postural scoliosis can be cured by physiotherapy but that the structural examples can only be improved (often by compensation) and prevented from getting worse. This, however, is a worth-while job and the available methods are examined in turn with a preference for gradual traction on a convex frame followed by corrective plaster or polythene jackets.

Operative fusion is recommended at the end of treatment in about 10% of cases and particularly in poliomyelitis where other methods are so often ineffectual.

The book is well illustrated and produced with a list of about 100 references at the end.


The first edition of this text-book on the nursing of the healthy and the sick child appeared as recently as 1939 and the appearance of a fourth edition now speaks for its popularity in Germany. Professor Catel has shown us how factually and practically he can present a subject in his Differentialdiagnostische Symptomatologie, and this book is a down-to-earth account of nursing and its technique. While a nurse is unlikely to be up to the standard of the M.R.C.P. when she has finished reading it, there will be remarkably little about nursing that she will not know.

The many illustrations are well chosen and clearly produced. As points of minor criticism, it is difficult to believe that the obtaining of a non-catheter specimen of urine from the female baby is as easy as it suggested, while it is surprising in 1952 to find the technique of obtaining blood from the longitudinal sinus is still described and illustrated. These are not, however, faults of the book, but differences of opinion, and do not detract from its merits.

There appears to be remarkably little difference between the practice of nursing in Germany and in this country, and the book could be owned, with profit, by any German-reading nurse; it would be a pleasure to see it translated into English.


This book is intended as a sequel to Spielmeyer’s well known work on the ‘General Histopathology of the Nervous System,’ a book which, although written before the microglia and oligodendroglia were differentiated from the other supporting elements of the central nervous system, has been the bible of neuropathologists the world over. The present volume assumes a knowledge of the general pathology of the nervous system, but there is still a vast field to be covered and the author is to be congratulated on the comprehensiveness of his survey.
The subject matter is divided, on an aetiological basis where possible, into 12 main chapters, dealing with (1) inflammatory, (2) vascular and (3) degenerative diseases, (4) causes of mental deficiency, (5) degenerative processes of uncertain aetiology, (6) trauma, (7) tumours, (8) dysontogenetic processes related to tumour formation, (9) the results of exogenous chemical poisons, (10) damage by physical agents, (11) damage to the nervous system in general diseases and (12) the effects of disease of the hypothalamo-hypophyseal apparatus. Some of these sections are of special merit. That on traumatic lesions of the brain, spinal cord and peripheral nerves is an excellent description of this complicated subject and includes a discussion both of the older and newer views of the mechanism of contusion and concussion of the brain. Perhaps the description of contusions of the spinal cord lays more stress on intra-medullary haemorrhage and haematomyelia than English authors have accepted since the work of Gordon Holmes in 1915. The author confesses that he can seldom find blood pigment in the scars of old spinal contusions but explains this by an unusual rapidity of removal of this pigment from the spinal cord!

The description of the various forms of cerebral maldevelopment which may be associated with idiocy, imbecility, hemiplegia and diplegia is short but good. He uses here the unfamiliar but useful term 'micro-polygyria' to describe the form of maldevelopment of the cerebral cortex in which thin, corrugated layers of nerve cells are seen in rather wide, abnormally arranged convolutions, giving an external appearance resembling an edible chestnut kernel. This condition rarely involves the whole cerebrum (but there are excellent illustrations of such a brain in the text). More often, as the author points out, only parts of the brain, often symmetrically placed, are affected. The descriptions of the effects of birth trauma, including haemorrhage and venous thrombosis, and of kernicterus and its sequela are also excellent.

In some cases the attempt to arrange the subject matter on an aetiological basis leads to apparent confusion, as when we find descriptions of the different forms of 'diffuse cerebral sclerosis' in three widely separate sections of the book. This is perhaps useful as a reminder that the condition of diffuse demyelination of the brain, which we in this country often loosely call 'Schilder's disease,' is the end-result of several different pathogenetic processes, which probably have an equally varied aetiology.

The divorce of German from English-speaking culture during the war years no doubt accounts for some rather surprising omissions. For example, we find no reference to vitamin B in reference to Wernicke's encephalopathy or Korsakow's syndrome, nor of carcinoma in relation either to polyneuritis or to degenerations in the spinal cord and cerebellum. Indeed the cerebellum is relatively neglected, neither parenchymatous cortical cerebellar atrophy, hereditary cerebellar-olivary degeneration nor the Arnold-Chiari malformation being mentioned. Another gap in the author's knowledge, or at least in his descriptions of disease, is the retina, the degenerations of which should surely be included in neuropathology. One at least expects that, in the section on amaurotic family idiocy, the author would devote more than one sentence to the retinal counterparts of the ophthalmoscopic changes on which the diagnosis usually rests. Even the optic nerves are very cursorily treated, especially as regards syphilitic optic atrophy, which is considered as practically always an accompaniment of tabes. This statement and another in the same section, that in tabes the degeneration begins in the posterior root zone of the dorsal columns, are contrary to the experience of most neuropathologists. So also is the statement that syringobulbia is a rare accompaniment of syringomyelia. It is perhaps rarely looked for, especially in the lower half of the medulla where it is most common, but its incidence, in the reviewer's experience, approximates 50% of all fatal cases.

Although, owing to modern conditions, nothing comparable to the beautiful coloured drawings of Spillemeyer's textbook are found in this book, the illustrations are for the most part carefully chosen and well reproduced. The short clinical descriptions and full discussions of aetiology are also valuable features of a work which appears to be the best and most complete textbook of neuropathology that has been published since the war.

Correction.—Dr. Acheson regrets that certain errors appeared in Table 4 of his paper on 'Radiographs of the Hand as an Index of Skeletal Maturity,' published in the August issue (27, 382). The relevant section of Table 4 should read as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Birth Weight (lb. oz.)</th>
<th>Weight at 12 Months (lb. oz.)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>6 13</td>
<td>21 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for all males in survey</td>
<td>7 11</td>
<td>22 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference between averages with standard error</td>
<td>-14 oz. ± 7.</td>
<td>-26 oz. ± 15.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and consequently

... Since the weight range at 1 year is greater than at birth, the differences between the averages at 12 months (26 oz. for males and 19 oz. for females) ...