REVIEW


The author described this volume as of the nature of a will, and, although he lived to see it published, his many friends and admirers will regret how nearly the description was justified. The aim of the book is to trace the development of function of the mammalian foetus, and it is essentially based on work which, over a period of many years, the author had himself carried out or for which he had been largely responsible. This in itself makes the book a fascinating synthesis, since it illustrates how planned experiment in a particular field can build up a monument of knowledge from its foundations. As originally designed, the work was divided into two volumes; the first of these deals with the function of the placenta, growth of the foetus, and the possible influence on this of diet, the volume and distribution of blood in the foetal circulation, oxygen consumption, and pre-natal and neonatal respiration. (In the second volume it was intended to deal with the nervous system and metabolic problems.)

The particular interest of this book to the paediatrician will be obvious. To take only two examples: the effect of maternal malnutrition on the foetus, and the physiology of respiration at birth, are both questions of the first importance in relation to neonatal mortality, and ones on which the experimental approach can give practical help to the clinician. There is good evidence, for instance, that in the sheep the size of the foetus at birth can be materially reduced by severe restriction of maternal diet, and it is interesting to find that Dr. Clement A. Smith’s investigations in Holland (J. Pediat., 1947, 30, 229) showed that the birth weight, and to a lesser extent the birth length, of infants also were reduced by maternal deprivation during the last half or last third of pregnancy. Similarly Barcroft’s observations on the mechanism of respiration at birth, though made in the first instance on lambs, can be utilized in formulating a rational method of resuscitating the human infant.

The publishers have produced a volume which it is a pleasure to read, and which gives cause for optimism regarding the possible standard of post-war book production.


This book is one of the familiar scissors-and-paste variety, which nevertheless has a certain value to the harassed paediatrician attempting to keep abreast of the literature. A large number of papers are somewhat uncritically abstracted, and the publishers have brightened the dust-cover with a quiz, to which the page-numbers of the answers are attached.


Some twenty-two articles on Child Health, which have appeared in the Practitioner and have been subsequently revised, make up this useful addition to the well-known series of Practitioner Handbooks. Sir Leonard Parsons contributes an introduction on child health and the general practitioner, and other subjects included are child welfare centres, day nurseries and nursery schools, the school health services and special schools, child guidance clinics, care of the newborn, care of deaf, blind, crippled, rheumatic and tuberculous children, and control of the common fevers of childhood. Four articles are devoted to nutrition or infant feeding. A fair distribution of subject matter between the clinical and social aspects of child health has been made. It is appropriate that the last of the Practitioner handbooks to be edited by Professor Moncrieff should be devoted to child health, and we wish it an even wider popularity than its predecessors.


Dr. Bowley has succeeded in writing a sensible guide to the psychology and handling of the underprivileged child, in language which should be quite comprehensible to the intelligent lay reader for which it is primarily intended. The Curtis Committee Report has made it abundantly clear that there is a need for a book of this type, and this is one which can be recommended.


This book is already well known and deservedly popular. In view of the introduction of penicillin, the fifth edition has been extensively revised, although it is only two years since the fourth edition was published. The production and illustration are for the most part excellent, though it might have been wiser to adopt a consistent policy in