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 neurotropic 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 worthwhile 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 very 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.